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THE  
BEST LOVED POEMS  
*and* BALLADS *of*

James Whitcomb Riley

OMNIBUS EDITION

With Illustrations by  
ETHEL FRANKLIN BETTS



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NEW YORK CITY

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James Whitcomb Riley

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*To*

*The Children of The Old Times and of These*

*With changeless love*





## *WHILE THE HEART BEATS YOUNG*

*WHILE the heart beats young!—O the  
splendor of the Spring,  
With all her dewy jewels on, is not so fair a  
thing!*

*The fairest, rarest morning of the blossom-time  
of May*

*Is not so sweet a season as the season of to-day  
While Youth's diviner climate folds and holds us,  
close caressed,*

*As we feel our mothers with us by the touch of  
face and breast;—*

*Our bare feet in the meadows, and our fancies  
up among*

*The airy clouds of morning—while the heart  
beats young.*

*While the heart beats young and our pulses leap  
and dance,*

*With every day a holiday and life a glad  
romance,—*

*We hear the birds with wonder, and with wonder  
watch their flight—*

*Standing still the more enchanted, both of  
hearing and of sight,*



*When they have vanished wholly,—for, in fancy,  
wing-to-wing  
We fly to Heaven with them; and, returning,  
still we sing  
The praises of this lower Heaven with tireless  
voice and tongue,  
Even as the Master sanctions—while the heart  
beats young.*

*While the heart beats young!—While the heart  
beats young!  
O green and gold old Earth of ours, with azure  
overhung  
And looped with rainbows!—grant us yet this  
grassy lap of thine—  
We would be still thy children, through the shower  
and the shine!  
So pray we, lisping, whispering, in childish love  
and trust,  
With our beseeching hands and faces lifted from  
the dust  
By fervor of the poem, all unwritten and unsung,  
Thou givest us in answer, while the heart beats  
young.*



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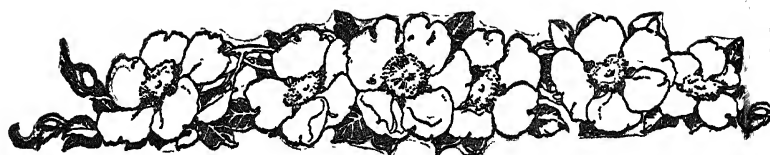
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THE BEST LOVED POEMS  
AND BALLADS OF  
JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY





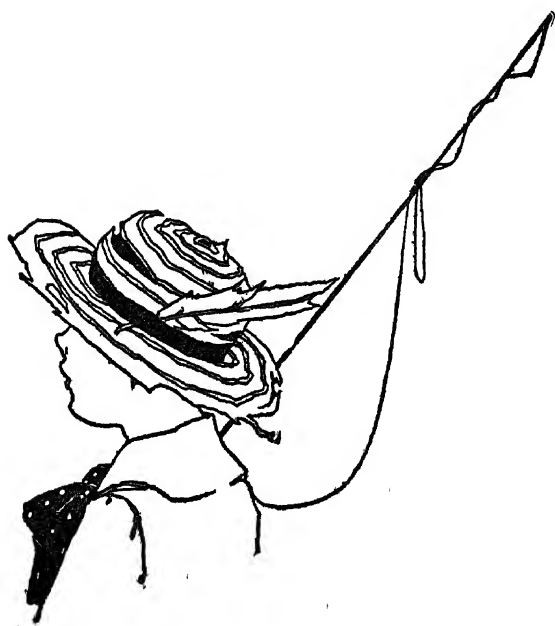
## THE RAGGEDY MAN

**O** THE RAGGEDY MAN! He works fer Pa;  
 An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!  
 He comes to our house every day,  
 An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;  
 An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh  
 When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;  
 An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—  
 He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—  
 Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?  
 Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good  
He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;  
An' nen he spades in our garden, too,  
An' does most things 'at *boys* can't do!—  
He clumbed clean up in our big tree  
An' shooked a' apple down fer me—  
An' nother'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—  
An' nother'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—  
Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes  
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:  
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,  
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallows themselves!  
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,  
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,  
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can  
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann,  
Er Ma er Pa er The Raggedy Man!  
Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time when he  
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,  
Says "When *you're* big like your Pa is,  
Air *you* go' to keep a fine store like his—  
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—  
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows!"  
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,  
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—  
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"  
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!



## WHERE SHALL WE LAND

*Where shall we land you, sweet?*

—SWINBURNE

ALL listlessly we float  
Out seaward in the boat  
That beareth Love.

Our sails of purest snow  
Bend to the blue below  
And to the blue above.  
Where shall we land?

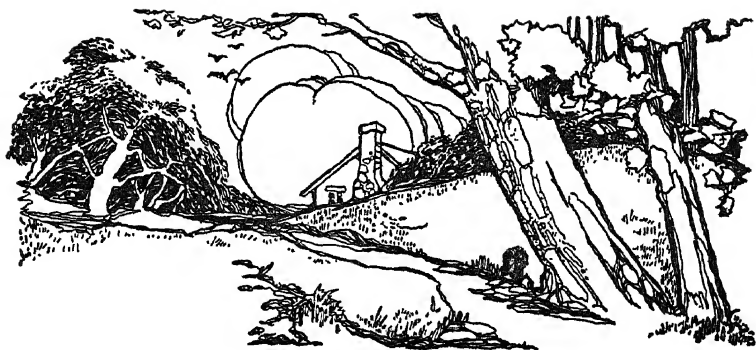
We drift upon a tide  
Shoreless on every side,  
Save where the eye  
Of Fancy sweeps far lands  
Shelved slopingly with sands  
Of gold and porphyry.  
Where shall we land?

The fairy isles we see,  
Loom up so mistily—  
So vaguely fair,  
We do not care to break  
Fresh bubbles in our wake  
To bend our course for there.  
Where shall we land?

The warm winds of the deep  
Have lulled our sails to sleep,  
And so we glide  
Careless of wave or wind,  
Or change of any kind,  
Or turn of any tide.  
Where shall we land?

We droop our dreamy eyes  
Where our reflection lies  
Steeped in the sea,  
And, in an endless fit  
Of languor, smile on it  
And its sweet mimicry.  
Where shall we land?

“Where shall we land?” God’s grace!  
I know not any place  
So fair as this—  
Swung here between the blue  
Of sea and sky, with you  
To ask me, with a kiss,  
“Where shall we land?”



## MAYMIE'S STORY OF RED RIDING-HOOD

**W**'Y, one time wuz a little-weenty dirl,  
An' she wuz named Red Riding-Hood,  
'cause her—

Her *Ma* she maked a little red cloak fer her  
'At turnt up over her head.—An' it 'uz all  
Ist one piece o' red cardinul 'at's like  
The drate-long stockin's the storekeepers has.—  
Oh! it 'uz purtiest cloak in all the world  
An' *all* this town er anywheres they is!  
'An' so, one day, her *Ma* she put it on  
Red Riding-Hood, she did—one day, she did —  
'An' it 'uz *Sund'y*—'cause the little cloak  
It 'uz too nice to wear ist *ever*' day  
'An' *all* the time!—An' so her *Ma*, she put  
It on Red Riding-Hood—an' telled her not  
To dit no dirt on it ner dit it mussed  
Ner nothin'! An'—an'—nen her *Ma* she dot

Her little basket out, 'at Old Kriss bringed  
Her wunst—one time, he did. An' nen she fill'  
It full o' whole lots an' 'bundance o' dood things t' eat  
(Allus my Dran'ma *she* says " 'bundance," too).  
An' so her Ma fill' little Red Riding-Hood's  
Nice basket all ist full o' dood things t' eat,  
An' tell her take 'em to her old Dran'ma—  
An' not to *spill* 'em, neever—'cause ef she  
'Ud stump her toe an' spill 'em, her Dran'ma  
She'll haf to *punish* her!

An' nen—An' so  
Little Red Riding-Hood she p'omised she  
'Ud be all careful nen, an' cross' her heart  
'At she won't run an' spill 'em all fer six—  
Five—ten—two-hundred-bushel-dollars-gold!  
An' nen she kiss' her Ma doo'-by an' went  
A-skippin' off—away fur off frough the  
Big woods, where her Dran'ma she live at—  
No!—

She didn't do *a-skippin'*, like I said:—  
She ist went *walkin'*—careful-like an' slow—  
Ist like a little lady—walkin' 'long  
As all polite an' nice—an' slow—an' straight—  
An' turn her toes—ist like she's marchin' in  
The Sund'y-School k-session!

An'—an'—so  
She 'uz a-doin' along—an' doin' along—

On frough the drate-big woods—'cause her  
Dran'ma

She live 'way, 'way fur off frough the big woods  
From *her* Ma's house. So when Red Riding-Hood  
Dit to do there, she allus have most fun—  
When she do frough the drate-big woods, you  
know.—

'Cause she ain't feard a bit o' anything!  
An' so she sees the little hoppty-birds  
'At's in the trees, an' flyin' all around,  
An' singin' dlad as ef their parunts said  
They'll take 'em to the magic-lantern show!  
An' she 'ud pull the purty flowers an' things  
A-growin' round the stumps.—An' she 'ud ketch  
The purty butterflies, an' drasshoppers,  
An' stick pins frough 'em—No!—I ist *said* that!—  
'Cause she's too dood an' kind an' 'bedient  
To *hurt* things thataway.—She'd *ketch* 'em, though,  
An' ist *play* wiv 'em ist a little while,  
An' nen she'd let 'em fly away, she would,  
An' ist skip on ad'in to her Dran'ma's.

An' so, while she 'uz doin' 'long an' 'long,  
First thing you know they 'uz a drate-big old  
Mean wicked Wolf jumped out 'at wanted t' eat  
Her up, but *dassent* to—'cause wite clos't there  
They wuz a Man a-choppin' wood, an' you

Could *hear* him.—So the old Wolf he 'uz *feard*  
Only to ist be *kind* to her.—So he  
Ist 'tended-like he wuz dood friends to her  
An' says, "Dood morning, little Red Riding-  
Hood!"—  
All ist as kind!

An' nen Riding-Hood

She say "Dood morning," too—all kind an' nice—  
Ist like her Ma she learn'—No!—mustn't say  
"Learn'," 'cause "*learn*" it's unproper.—So she say  
It like her *Ma* she "*teached*" her.—An'—so she  
Ist says "Dood morning" to the Wolf—'cause she  
Don't know ut-tall 'at he's a *wicked* Wolf  
An' want to eat her up!

Nen old Wolf smile

An' say, so kind: "Where air you doin' at?"  
Nen little Red Riding-Hood she say: "I'm doin'  
To my Dran'ma's, 'cause my Ma say I might."  
Nen, when she tell him that, the old Wolf he  
Ist turn an' light out frough the big thick woods,  
Where she can't see him any more. An' so  
She think he's went to *his* house—but he hain't,—  
He's went to her Dran'ma's, to be there first—  
An' *ketch* her, ef she don't watch mighty sharp  
What she's about!

An' nen when the old Wolf  
Dit to her Dran'ma's house, he's purty smart, —  
An' so he 'tend-like *he's* Red Riding-Hood,  
An' knock at th' door. An' Riding-Hood's Dran'ma  
She's sick in bed an' can't come to the door  
An' open it. So th' old Wolf knock' *two* times.  
An' nen Red Riding-Hood's Dran'ma she says,  
"Who's there?" she says. An' old Wolf 'tends-like  
he's

Little Red Riding-Hood, you know, an' make'  
His voice soun' ist like hers, an' says: "It's me,  
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood an' I'm  
Ist come to *see* you."

Nen her old Dran'ma  
She think it *is* little Red Riding-Hood,  
An' so she say: "Well, come in nen an' make  
You'se'f at home," she says, "'cause I'm down sick  
In bed, an' got the 'ralgia, so's I can't  
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so th' old Wolf  
Ist march' in nen an' shet the door ad'in,  
An' *drowl'*, he did, an' *splunge'* up on the bed  
An' et up old Miz Riding-Hood 'fore she  
Could put her specs on an' see who it wuz.—  
An' so she never knowed *who* et her up!

An' nen the wicked Wolf he ist put on  
Her nightcap, an' all covered up in bed—  
Like he wuz *her*, you know.

Nen, purty soon  
Here come along little Red Riding-Hood,  
An' *she* knock' at the door. An' old Wolf 'tend-  
Like *he's* her Dran'ma; an' he say, "Who's there?"  
Ist like her Dran'ma say, you know. An' so  
Little Red Riding-Hood she say: "It's *me*,  
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood an' I'm  
Ist come to *see* you."

An' nen old Wolf nen  
He cough an' say: "Well, come in nen an' make  
You'se'f at home," he says, "'cause I'm down sick  
In bed, an' got the 'ralgia, so's I can't  
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so she think  
It's her Dran'ma a-talkin'.—So she ist  
Open' the door an' come in, an' set down  
Her basket, an' taked off her things, an' bringed  
A chair an' clumbed up on the bed, wite by  
The old big Wolf she thinks is her Dran'ma—  
Only she thinks the old Wolf's dot whole lots  
More bigger ears, an' lots more whiskers, too,  
Than her Dran'ma; an' so Red Riding-Hood  
She's kind o' skeered a little. So she says,

"Oh, Dran'ma, what *big eyes* you dot!" An' nen  
The old Wolf says: "They're ist big thataway  
'Cause I'm so dlad to see you!"

Nen she says,  
"Oh, Dran'ma, what a drate-big nose you dot!"  
Nen th' old Wolf says: "It's ist big thataway  
Ist 'cause I smell the dood things 'at you bringed  
Me in the basket!"

An' nen Riding-Hood  
She says, "Oh-me-oh-*my!* Dran'ma! what big  
White long sharp teeth you dot!"

Nen old Wolf says:  
"Yes—an' they're thataway"—an' drowled—  
"They're thataway," he says, "to *eat* you wiv!"  
An' nen he ist *jump'* at her.—

But she *scream'*—  
An' *scream'*, she did.—So's 'at the Man  
'At wuz a-choppin' wood, you know,—*he* hear,  
An' come a-runnin' in there wiv his ax;  
An', 'fore the old Wolf know' what he's about,  
He split his old brains out an' killed him s' quick  
It make' his head swim!—An' Red Riding-Hood  
She wuzn't hurt at all!

An' the big Man  
He tooked her all safe home, he did, an' tell  
Her Ma she's all right an' ain't hurt at all

An' old Wolf's dead an' killed—an' ever'thing!—  
So her Ma wuz so tickled an' so proud,  
She gived *him* all the dood things t' eat they wuz  
'At's in the basket, an' she tell' him 'at  
She's much oblige', an' say to "call ad'in."  
An' story's honest *truth*—an' all *so*, too!





### A SUDDEN SHOWER

**B**AREFOOTED boys scud up the street,  
Or skurry under sheltering sheds;  
And schoolgirl faces, pale and sweet,  
Gleam from the shawls about their heads.

Doors bang; and mother-voices call  
From alien homes; and rusty gates  
Are slammed; and high above it all,  
The thunder grim reverberates.

And then, abrupt,—the rain! the rain!—  
The earth lies gasping; and the eyes  
Behind the streaming window-pane  
Smile at the trouble of the skies.

The highway smokes; sharp echoes ring;  
The cattle bawl and cowbells clank;  
And into town comes galloping  
The farmer's horse, with steaming flank.

The swallow dips beneath the eaves,  
And flirts his plumes and folds his wings;  
And under the catawba leaves  
The caterpillar curls and clings.

The bumble-bee is pelted down  
The wet stem of the hollyhock;  
And sullenly, in spattered brown,  
The cricket leaps the garden walk.

Within, the baby claps his hands  
And crows with rapture strange and vague;  
Without, beneath the rosebush stands  
A dripping rooster on one leg.



## THE USED-TO-BE

**B**EYOND the purple, hazy trees  
Of summer's utmost boundaries;  
Beyond the sands—beyond the seas—  
Beyond the range of eyes like these,  
And only in the reach of the  
Enraptured gaze of Memory,  
There lies a land, long lost to me,—  
The land of Used-to-be!

A land enchanted—such as swung  
In golden seas when sirens clung  
Along their dripping brinks, and sung  
To Jason in that mystic tongue  
That dazed men with its melody—  
O such a land, with such a sea  
Kissing its shores eternally,  
Is the fair Used-to-be.

A land where music ever girds  
The air with belts of singing-birds,  
And sows all sounds with such sweet words,  
That even in the low of herds  
A meaning lives so sweet to me,  
Lost laughter ripples limpidly  
From lips brimmed over with the glee  
Of rare old Used-to-be.

Lost laughter, and the whistled tunes  
Of boyhood's mouth of crescent runes,  
That rounded, through long afternoons,  
To serenading plenilunes—

When starlight fell so mistily  
That, peering up from bended knee,  
I dreamed 'twas bridal drapery  
Snowed over Used-to-be.

O land of love and dreamy thoughts,  
And shining fields, and shady spots  
Of coolest, greenest grassy plots,  
Embossed with wild forget-me-nots!—

And all ye blooms that longingly  
Lift your fair faces up to me  
Out of the past, I kiss in ye  
The lips of Used-to-be.



### CHRISTINE'S SONG

**U**P in Tentoleena Land—  
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!  
'All the Dollies, hand in hand,  
Mina, Nainie, and Serena,  
Dance the Fairy fancy dances,  
With glad songs and starry glances,  
Lispings roundelays; and, after,  
Bird-like interludes of laughter  
Strewn and scattered o'er the lawn  
Their gilt sandals twinkle on  
Through light mists of silver sand—  
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—  
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!  
Blares the eerie Elfin band—  
Trumpet, harp and concertina—  
Larkspur bugle—honeysuckle  
Cornet, with a quickstep chuckle  
In its golden throat; and, maybe,  
Lilies-of-the-valley they be  
Baby-silver-bells that chime  
Musically all the time,  
Tossed about from hand to hand—  
Up in Tentoleena Land.

Up in Tentoleena Land—  
Tentoleena! Tentoleena!  
Dollies dark, and blonde and bland—  
Sweet as musk-rose or verbena—  
Sweet as moon-blown daffodillies,  
Or wave-jostled water-lilies,  
Yearning to'rd the rose-mouths, ready  
Leaning o'er the river's eddy,—  
Dance, and glancing fling to you,  
Through these lines you listen to,  
Kisses blown from lip and hand  
Out of Tentoleena Land!



## BUB SAYS

**T**HE moon in the sky is a custard-pie,  
An' the clouds is the cream pour'd o'er it,  
An' all o' the glittering stars in the sky  
Is the powdered sugar for it.

. . . . .

Johnts—he's proudest boy in town—  
'Cause his Mommy she cut down  
His Pa's pants fer Johnts—an' there  
Is 'nuff left fer *'nother* pair!

. . . . .

One time, when her Ma was gone,  
Little Elsie she put on  
All her Ma's fine clothes—an' black  
Grow-grain-silk, an' sealskin-sack;  
Nen while she wuz flouncin' out  
In the hall an' round about  
Some one knocked, an' Elsie she  
Clean forgot an' run to see  
Who's there at the door—an' saw  
Mighty quick at wuz her Ma.  
But ef she ain't saw at all,  
She'd a-knowed her parasol!

. . . . .

Gran'pas an' Gran'mas is funniest folks!—  
Don't be jolly, ner tell no jokes,  
Tell o' the weather an' frost an' snow  
O' that cold New Year's o' long ago;  
'And then they sigh at each other an' cough  
An' talk about suddently droppin' off.





## THE LISPER

**E**LSIE MINGUS *lisps*, she does!  
She lives wite acrosst from us  
In Miz. Ayers'uz house 'at she  
Rents part to the Mingsuz.—  
Yes, an' Elsie plays wiv me.

Elsie lisps so, she can't say  
Her own name, ist *anyway*!—  
She says "*Elthy*"—like they wuz  
Feathers on her words, an' they  
Ist stick on her tongue like fuzz.

*My!* she's *purty*, though!—An' when  
She *lisps*, w'y, she's purty *nen*!  
When she telled me, wunst, her doll  
Wuz so "thweet," an' I p'ten'  
*I* lisp, too,—she laugh'—'at 's all!—

She don't never git mad none—  
'Cause she know I'm ist in fun.—  
Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled.—  
Of all childerns—ever' one—  
She's the *ladylikest* child!—

My Ma say she is! One time  
Elsie start to say the rhyme,  
“Thing a thong o' thixpenth”—*Wheel!*  
I ist yell! An' Ma say I'm  
Unpolite as I can be!

Wunst I went wiv Ma to call  
On Elsie's Ma, an' eat an' all;  
An' nen Elsie, when we've et,  
An' we 're playin' in the hall,  
Elsie say: It's etikett

Fer young gentlemens, like me,  
Eatin' when they's *company*,  
Not to never ever crowd  
Down their food, ner “thip their tea  
Ner thup thoop so awful loud!”



## AT UTTER LOAF

### I

**A**N afternoon as ripe with heat  
As might the golden pippin be  
With mellowness if at my feet  
It dropped now from the apple-tree  
My hammock swings in lazily.

### II

The boughs about me spread a shade  
That shields me from the sun, but weaves  
With breezy shuttles through the leaves  
Blue rifts of skies, to gleam and fade  
Upon the eyes that only see  
Just of themselves, all drowsily.

### III

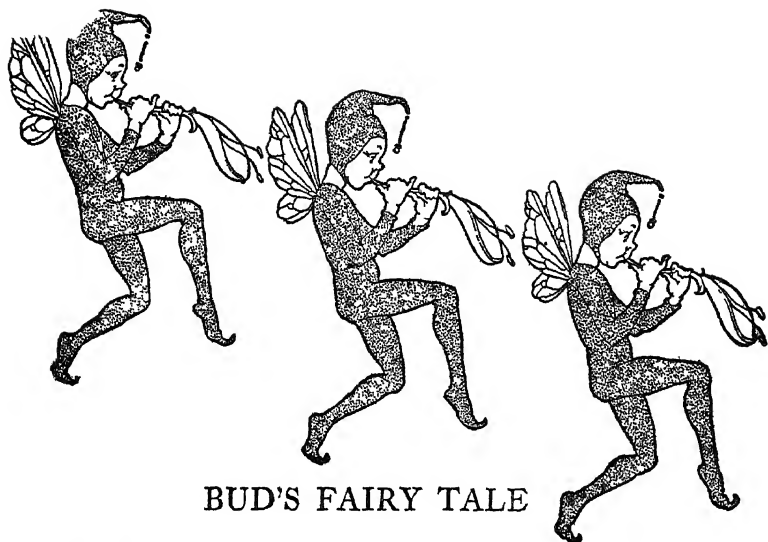
Above me drifts the fallen skein  
Of some tired spider, looped and blown,  
As fragile as a strand of rain,  
Across the air, and upward thrown  
By breaths of hay-fields newly mown—  
So glimmering it is and fine,  
I doubt these drowsy eyes of mine.

## IV

Far-off and faint as voices pent  
In mines, and heard from underground,  
Come murmurs as of discontent,  
And clamorings of sullen sound  
The city sends me, as, I guess,  
To vex me, though they do but bless  
Me in my drowsy fastnesses.

## V

I have no care. I only know  
My hammock hides and holds me here  
In lands of shade a prisoner:  
While lazily the breezes blow  
Light leaves of sunshine over me,  
And back and forth and to and fro  
I swing, enwrapped in some hushed glee,  
Smiling at all things drowsily.



### BUD'S FAIRY TALE

**S**OME peoples thinks they ain't no Fairies *now*  
 No more yet!—But they *is*, I bet! 'Cause ef  
 They *wuzn't* Fairies, nen I' like to know  
 Who'd w'ite 'bout Fairies in the books, an' tell  
 What Fairies *does*, an' how their *picture* looks,  
 An' all an' ever'thing! W'y, ef they don't  
 Be Fairies any more, nen little boys  
 'Ud ist *sleep* when they go to sleep an' won't  
 Have ist no dweams at all,—'cause Fairies—*good*  
 Fairies—they're a-purpose to make dweams!  
 But they *is* Fairies—an' I *know* they is!  
 'Cause one time wunst, when it's all Summer-time,  
 An' don't haf to be no fires in the stove  
 Er fireplace to keep warm wiv—ner don't haf  
 To wear old scwatchy flannen shirts at all,  
 An' ain't no fweeze—ner coïd—ner snow!—An'—an'

Old skweeky twees got all the gween leaves on  
An' ist keeps noddin', noddin' all the time,  
Like they 'uz lazy an' a-twyin' to go  
To sleep an' couldn't, 'cause the wind won't quit  
A-blowin' in 'em, an' the birds won't stop  
A-singin', so's they *kin*.—But twees *don't* sleep,  
I guess! But *little boys* sleeps—an' *dweams*, too.—  
An' that's a sign they's Fairies.

So, one time,  
When I be'n playin' "Store" wunst over in  
The shed of their old stable, an' Ed Howard  
He maked me quit a-bein' pardners, 'cause  
I dwinked the 'tend-like sody-water up  
An' et the shore-'nuff crackers,—w'y, nen I  
Clumbed over in our garden where the gwapes  
Wuz purt' nigh ripe: An' I wuz ist a-layin'  
There on th' old cwooked seat 'at Pa maked in  
Our arber,—an' so I 'uz layin' there  
A-whittlin' beets wiv my new dog-knife, an'  
A-lookin' wite up thue the twimbly leaves—  
An' wuzn't 'sleep at all!—An'-sir!—first thing  
You know, a little *Fairy* hopped out there!—  
*A leetle-teenty Fairy!—hope-may-die!*  
An' he look' down at me, he did—an' he  
Ain't bigger'n a *yellerbird*!—an' he  
Say "Howdy-do!" he did—an' I could *hear*

Him—ist as *plain!*

Nen *I* say “Howdy-do!”

An’ he say “*I’m* all hunky, Nibsey; how  
Is *your* folks comin’ on?”

An’ nen *I* say

“My name ain’t ‘*Nibsey*,’ neever—my name’s  
*Bud*.—

An’ what’s *your* name?” *I* says to him.

An’ he

Ist laugh an’ say, “‘*Bud’s*’ awful *funny* name!”  
An’ he ist laid back on a big bunch o’ gwapes  
An’ laugh’ an’ laugh’, he did—like somebody  
’Uz tick-el-un his feet!

An’ nen *I* say—

“What’s *your* name,” nen *I* say, “afore you bu’st  
Yo’s’e’f a-laughin’ ’bout *my* name?” *I* says.

An’ nen he dwy up laughin’—kind o’ mad—

An’ say, “W’y, *my* name’s *Squidjicum*,” he says.

An’ nen *I* laugh an’ say—“*Gee!* what a name!”

An’ when *I* make fun of his name, like that,

He ist git awful mad an’ spunky, an’

’Fore you know, he gwabbed holt of a vine—

A big long vine ’at’s danglin’ up there, an’

He ist helt on wite tight to that, an’ down

He swung quick past my face, he did, an’ ist

Kicked at me hard’s he could!

But I'm too quick  
 Fer *Mr. Squidjicum!* I ist weached out  
 An' ketched him, in my hand—an' helt him, too,  
 An' *squeezed* him, ist like little wobins when  
 They can't fly yet an' git flopped out their nest.  
 An' nen I turn him all wound over, an'  
 Look at him clos't, you know—wite clos't,—'cause ef  
 He *is* a Fairy, w'y, I want to see  
 The *wings* he's got.—But he's dwessed up so fine  
 'At I can't *see* no wings.—An' all the time  
 He's twyin' to kick me yet: An' so I take  
 F'esh holts an' *squeeze* ag'in—an' harder, too;  
 An' I says, "*Hold up, Mr. Squidjicum!*—  
 You're kickin' the w'ong man!" I says; an' nen  
 I ist *squeeze*' him, purt' nigh my *best*, I did—  
 An' I heerd somepin' bu'st!—An' nen he cwied  
 An' says, "You better look out what you're doin'!—  
 You' bu'st my spider-web suspenners, an'  
 You' got my wose-leaf coat all cwinkled up  
 So's I can't go to old Miss 'Hoodjicum's  
 Tea-party, 's afternoon!"

An' nen I says —  
 "Who's 'old Miss 'Hoodjicum'?" I says.  
 An' he  
 Says, "Ef you lemme loose I'll tell you."  
 So

I helt the little skeezics 'way fur out

In one hand—so's he can't jump down t' th' ground  
Wivout a-gittin' all stove up: an' nen .  
I says, "You're loose now.—Go ahead an' tell  
'Bout the 'tea-party' where you're goin' at  
So awful fast!" I says.

An' nen he say,—  
"No use to *tell* you 'bout it, 'cause you won't  
Believe it, 'less you go there your own se'f  
An' see it wiv your own two eyes!" he says.  
An' *he* says: "Ef you lemme *shore-'nuff* loose,  
An' p'omise 'at you'll keep wite still, an' won't  
Tetch nothin' 'at you see—an' never tell  
Nobody in the world—an' lemme loose—  
W'y, nen I'll *take* you there!"

But I says, "Yes  
An' ef I let you loose, you'll *run!*" I says.  
An' he says, "No, I won't!—I hope-may-die!"  
Nen I says, "Cwoss your heart you won't!"

An' he  
Ist cwoss his heart; an' nen I reach an' set  
The little feller up on a long vine—  
An' he 'uz so tickled to git loose ag'in,  
He gwab the vine wiv boff his little hands  
An' ist take an' turn in, he did, an' skin  
'Bout forty-'leben cats!

Nen when he git

Thue whirlin' wound the vine, an' set on top  
 Of it ag'in, w'y, nen his "wose-leaf coat"  
 He bwag so much about, it's ist all tored  
 Up, an' ist hangin' strips an' rags—so he  
 Look like his Pa's a dwunkard. An' so nen  
 When he see what he's done—a-actin' up  
 So smart,—he's awful mad, I guess; an' ist  
 Pout out his lips an' twis' his little face  
 Ist ugly as he kin, an' set an' tear  
 His whole coat off—an' sleeves an' all.—An' nen  
 He wad it all togevver an' ist *th'ow*  
 It at me ist as har<sup>1</sup> as he kin dwive!

An' when I weach to ketch him, an' 'uz goin'  
 To give him 'nuvver squeezin', *he ist flewed*  
*Clean up on top th' arbor!*—'Cause, you know,  
 They *wuz* wings on him—when he tored his *coat*  
 Clean off—they *wuz* wings *under there*. But they  
 Wuz purty wobbly-like an' wouldn't work  
 Hardly at all—'cause purty soon, when I  
 Th'owed clods at hīm, an' sticks, an' got him shoosed  
 Down off o' there, he come a-floppin' down  
 An' lit k-bang! on o'ur old chicken-coop,  
 An' ist laid there a-whimper'n' like a child!  
 An' I tiptoed up wite clos't, an' I says, "What's  
 The matter wiv ye, Squidjicum?"

An' he

Says: "Dog-gone! when my wings gits stwaight  
 ag'in,  
 Where you all *crumpled* 'em," he says, "I bet  
 I'll ist fly clean away an' won't take you  
 To old Miss Hoodjicum's at all!" he says.  
 An' nen I ist weach out wite quick, I did,  
 An' gwab the sassy little snipe ag'in—  
 Nen tooked my top-stwing an' tie down his wings  
 So's he *can't* fly, 'less'n I want him to!  
 An' nen I says: "Now, Mr. Squidjicum,  
 You better ist light out," I says, "to old  
 Miss Hoodjicum's, an' show *ner* how to git  
 There, too," I says; "er ef you won't," I says,  
 "I'll climb up wiv you on our buggy-shed  
 An' push you off!" I says.

An' nen he say

All wite, he'll show me there; an' tell me nen  
 To set him down wite easy on his feet,  
 An' loosen up the stwing a little where  
 It cut him under th' arms. An' nen he says,  
 "Come on!" he says; an' went a-limpin' 'long  
 The garden-paph—an' limpin' 'long an' 'long  
 Tel—purty soon he come on 'long to where's  
 A grea'-big cabbage-leaf. An' he stoop down  
 An' say, "Come on inunder here wiv me!"

So *I* stoop down an' crawl inunder there,  
Like he say.

An' inunder there's a grea'-  
Big clod, they is—a' awful grea'-big clod!  
An' nen he says, "*Woll this-here clod away!*"  
An' so I woll' the clod away. An' nen  
It's all wet, where the dew'z inunder where  
The old clod wuz.—An' nen the Fairy he  
Git on the wet-place: Nen he say to me,  
"Git on the wet-place, too!" An' nen he say,  
"Now hold yer breff an' shet yer eyes!" he says,  
"Tel I say *Squinchy-winchy!*" Nen he say—  
Somepin' *in Dutch*, I guess.—An' nen I felt  
Like we 'uz sinkin' down—an' sinkin' down!—  
Tel purty soon the little Fairy weach  
An' pinch my nose an' yell at me an' say,  
"*Squinchy-winchy! Look wherever you please!*"  
Nen when I looked—Oh! they 'uz purtiest place  
Down there you ever saw in all the World!—  
They 'uz ist *flowers* an' *woses*—yes, an' *twees*  
Wiv *blossoms* on an' *big wipe apples* boff!  
An' butterflies, they wuz—an' hummin'-birds—  
An' *yellerbirds* an' *bluebirds*—yes, an' *wed!*—  
An' ever'wheres an' all awound 'uz vines  
Wiv wipe p'serve-pears on 'em!—Yes, an' all  
An' ever'thing 'at's ever growin' in

'A garden—er canned up—all wipe at wunst!—  
 It wuz ist like a garden—only it  
 'Uz ist a *little bit* o' garden—'bout big wound  
 'As ist our twun'el-bed is.—An' all wound  
 An' wound the little garden's a gold fence—  
 An' little gold gate, too—an' ash-hopper  
 'At's all gold, too—an' ist full o' gold ashes!  
 An' wite in th' middle o' the garden wuz  
 A little gold house, 'at's ist 'bout as big  
 As ist a bird-cage is: An' *in* the house  
 They 'uz whole-lots *more* Fairies there—'cause ]  
 Picked up the little house, an' peeked in at  
 The winders, an' I see 'em all in there  
 Ist *buggin'* round! An' Mr. Squidjicum  
 He twy to make me quit, but I gwab *him*  
 An' poke him down the chimbly, too, I did!—  
 An' y'ort to see *him* hop out 'mongst 'em there!—  
 Ist like he 'uz the boss an' ist got back!—  
 "*Hain't ye got on them-air dew-dumplin's yet?*"  
 He says.

An' they says no.

An' nen he says—

"*Better git at 'em nen!*" he says, "*wite quick—*  
*'Cause old Miss Hoodjicum's a-comin'!*"

Nen

They all set wound a little gold tub—an'

All 'menced a-peelin' dewdwops, ist like they  
'Uz *peaches*.—An', it looked so funny, I  
Ist laugh' out loud, an' *dwopped* the little house,—  
An' 't bu'sted like a soap-bubble!—an' 't skeered  
Me so, I—I—I—I,—it skeered me so,—  
I—ist *waked* up.—No! I *ain't* be'n *asleep*  
An' *dweam* it all, like *you* think,—but it's shore  
Fer-certain *fact* an' cwoss my heart it is!





## THE MAN IN THE MOON

**S**AID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon:  
My!  
Sakes!

What a lot o' mistakes  
Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!  
But people that's be'n up to *see* him, like *me*,  
And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,  
Might drop a few facts that would interest you  
Clean!

Through!—

If you wanted 'em to—  
Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;  
Whee!

Whimm!

Ain't you sorry for him?

And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;  
And his eyes are so weak that they water and run  
If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—  
So he jes dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—  
Myl

Eyes!

But isn't he wise—

To jes dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—  
Whee!

Whing!

What a singular thing!

I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—  
There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—  
He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—  
Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!

Whang!

Ho!

Why, certainly so!—

It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—  
Gee!

Whizz!

What a pity that is!

And his toes have worked round where his heels  
ought to be.—

So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,  
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his  
mouth,

And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,  
Whing!

Whann!

What a marvellous man!

What a very remarkably marvellous man!

'N' The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man,  
Gits!

So!

Sullonesome, you know,—

Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—

That when *I* call on him and then come away,

He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—

Till—*Well!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim*,

Dadd!

Limb!

I'd go pardners with him—

Jes jump my job here and be pardners with *him!*

## KISSING THE ROD

O HEART of mine, we shouldn't  
Worry so!  
What we've missed of calm we couldn't  
Have, you know!  
What we've met of stormy pain,  
And of sorrow's driving rain,  
We can better meet again,  
If it blow!

We have erred in that dark hour  
We have known,  
When our tears fell with the shower,  
All alone!—  
Were not shine and shower blent  
As the gracious Master meant?—  
Let us temper our content  
With His own.

For, we know, not every morrow  
Can be sad;  
So, forgetting all the sorrow  
We have had,  
Let us fold away our fears,  
And put by our foolish tears,  
And through all the coming years  
Just be glad.

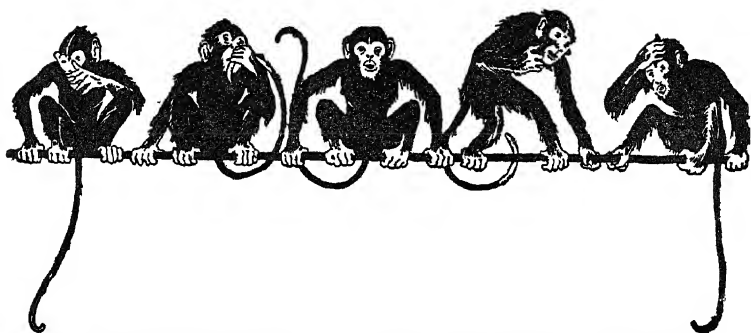
## LET SOMETHING GOOD BE SAID

**W**HEN over the fair fame of friend or foe  
The shadow of disgrace shall fall, instead  
Of words of blame, or proof of thus and so,  
Let something good be said.

Forget not that no fellow-being yet  
May fall so low but love may lift his head:  
Even the cheek of shame with tears is wet,  
If something good be said.

No generous heart may vainly turn aside  
In ways of sympathy; no soul so dead  
But may awaken strong and glorified,  
If something good be said.

And so I charge ye, by the thorny crown,  
And by the cross on which the Saviour bled,  
And by your own soul's hope of fair renown,  
Let something good be said!



## THE FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD

**T**HE funniest thing in the world, I know,  
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—  
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',  
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!  
First they're here, an' nen they're there,  
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—  
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,  
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—  
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;  
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,  
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—  
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be  
Skeerd at their tail 'at they happen to see;—  
But the funniest thing in the world they do  
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!



## SOME SCATTERING REMARKS OF BUB'S

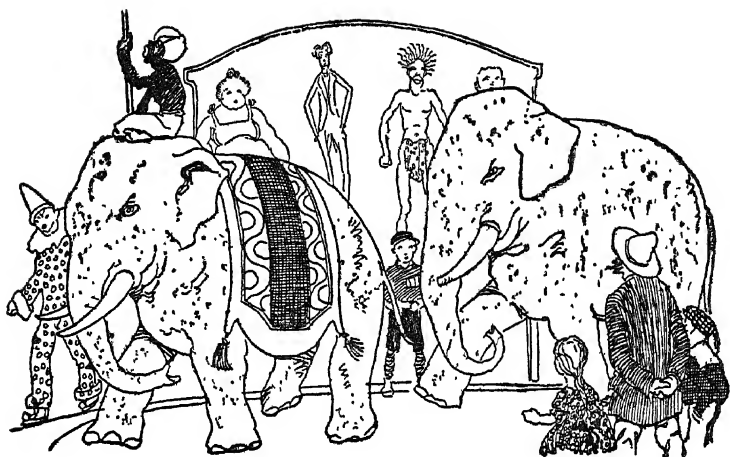
**W**UNST I tooked our pepper-box lid  
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,  
An' cooked 'em on our stove one day  
When our hired girl she said I may.

*Honey's the goodest thing—Oo-oo!*  
An' blackburry-pies is goodest, too!  
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin' wet  
Wiv tree-mullasus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'  
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—  
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—  
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e!

I *ruther* go to the Circus-show;  
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,  
I *ruther* go to the Sund'y School,  
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule  
'At's allus at the Sund'y School?



## THE CIRCUS-DAY PARADE

**O**H, THE Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles  
played and played!  
And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes  
and neighed,  
As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time  
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!  
How the grand band-wagon shone with a splendor all  
its own,  
And glittered with a glory that our dreams had never  
known!  
And how the boys behind, high and low of every kind,  
Marched in unconscious capture, with a rapture  
undefined!

How the horsemen, two and two, with their plumes of  
white and blue,  
And crimson, gold and purple, nodding by at me and  
you,  
Waved the banners that they bore, as the Knights in days  
of yore,  
Till our glad eyes gleamed and glistened like the spangles  
that they wore!

How the graceless-graceful stride of the elephant was  
eyed,  
And the capers of the little horse that cantered at his side!  
How the shambling camels, tame to the plaudits of their  
fame,  
With listless eyes came silent, masticating as they came.

How the cages jolted past, with each wagon battened fast,  
And the mystery within it only hinted of at last  
From the little grated square in the rear, and nosing there  
The snout of some strange animal that sniffed the outer  
air!

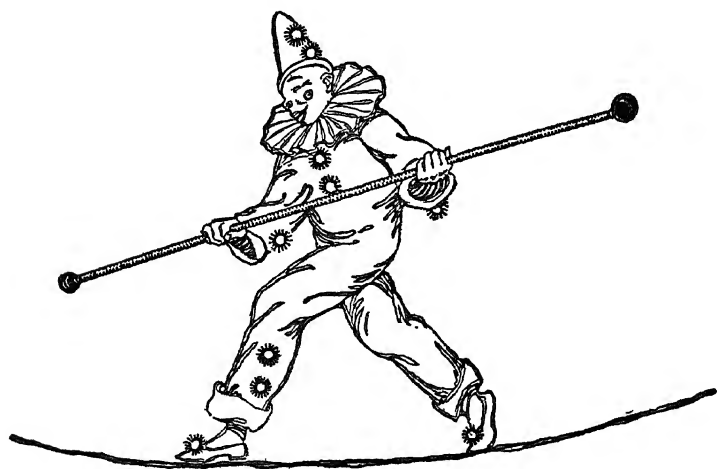
And, last of all, The Clown, making mirth for all the  
town,  
With his lips curved ever upward and his eyebrows ever  
down,

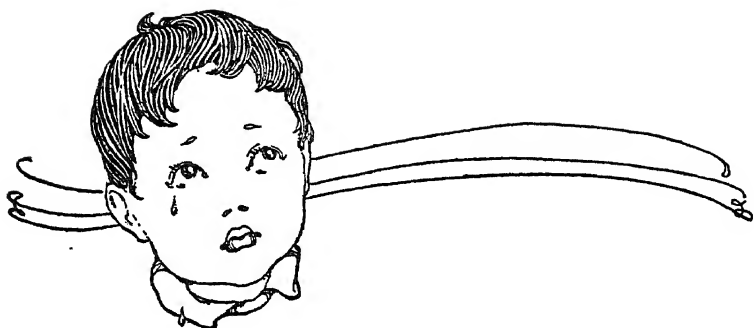
And his chief attention paid to the little mule that played  
A tattoo on the dashboard with his heels, in the Parade.

Oh! the Circus-Day Parade! How the bugles played and  
played!

And how the glossy horses tossed their flossy manes and  
neighed,

As the rattle and the rhyme of the tenor-drummer's time  
Filled all the hungry hearts of us with melody sublime!





## ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more no more!  
I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make  
It quit a-tall;

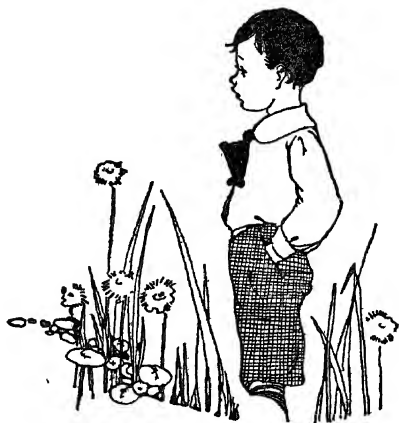
An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball  
An' puncture it; an' Sis she take  
An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor  
An' loozed it—blame it all!  
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!

An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—  
Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care  
She *is* my Aunt!  
An' my eyes stings; an' I'm  
Ist coughin' all the time,  
An' hurts me so, an' where my side's so sore  
Grampa felt where, an' he  
Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"  
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!

An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,  
An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!

An' my fi'-cents  
It sticked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore  
Purt'-nigh my thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git  
It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!  
But I ain't goin' to cry no more no more!

Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—  
Ist like I run an' don't res' none  
But ist run on when I ought to not;  
Yes, an' my chin  
An' lips 's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,  
'An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—  
'An' they all hurt so!—  
An' oh, my-oh!  
I'm a-startin' ag'in—  
I'm a-startin' ag'in, but I *won't*, fer shore!—  
*I ist ain't goin' to cry no more no more!*



## LOCKERBIE STREET

SUCH a dear little street it is, nestled away  
From the noise of the city and heat of the day,  
In cool shady coverts of whispering trees,  
With their leaves lifted up to shake hands with the  
breeze

Which in all its wide wanderings never may meet  
With a resting-place fairer than Lockerbie Street!

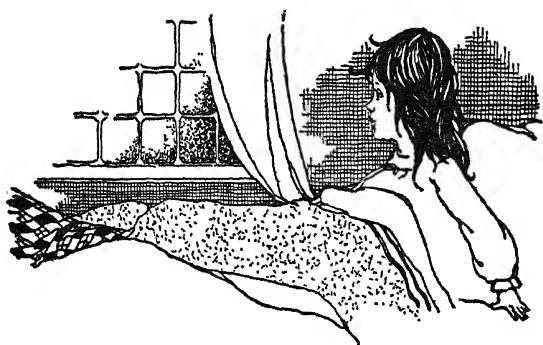
There is such a relief, from the clangor and din  
Of the heart of the town, to go loitering in  
Through the dim, narrow walks, with the sheltering  
shade

Of the trees waving over the long promenade,  
And littering lightly the ways of our feet  
With the gold of the sunshine of Lockerbie Street.

And the nights that come down the dark pathways of  
dusk,

With the stars in their tresses, and odors of musk  
In their moon-woven raiments, bespangled with dew,  
And looped up with lilies for lovers to use  
In the songs that they sing to the tinkle and beat  
Of their sweet serenadings through Lockerbie Street.

O my Lockerbie Street! You are fair to be seen—  
Be it noon of the day, or the rare and serene  
Afternoon of the night—you are one to my heart,  
And I love you above all the phrases of art,  
For no language could frame and no lips could repeat  
My rhyme-haunted raptures of Lockerbie Street.



## HER LONESOMENESS

**W**HEN little Elizabeth whispers  
Her morning-love to me,  
Each word of the little lisper's,  
As she clammers on my knee—  
Hugs me and whispers, "Mommy,  
Oh, I'm so glad it's day  
And the night's all gone away!"  
How it does thrill and awe me,—  
"The night's all gone away!"

"Sometimes I wake, all listenin',"  
She sighs, "and all's so still!—  
The moon and the stars half-glistenin'  
Over the window-sill;—  
And I look where the gas's pale light  
Is all turned down in the hall—  
And you ain't here at all!—  
And oh, how I wish it was daylight!  
—And you ain't here at all!

"And oh," she goes eerily whining  
And laughing, too, as she speaks,  
"If only the sun kept shining  
For weeks and weeks and weeks!—  
For the world's so dark, without you,  
And the moon's turned down so low—  
'Way in the night, you know,—  
And I get so lonesome about you!—  
'Way in the night, you know!"





## THE RAGGEDY MAN ON CHILDREN

**C**HILDERN—take 'em as they run—  
You kin *bet* on, ev'ry one!—  
Treat 'em right and reco'nize  
Human souls is all one size.

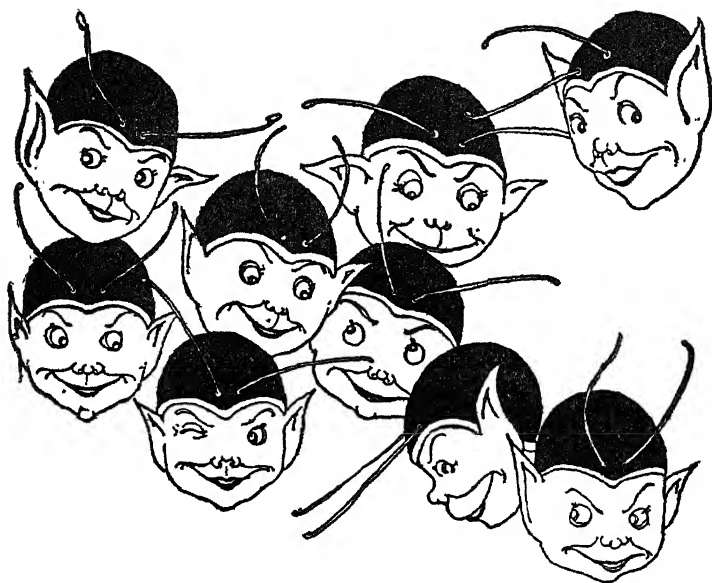
Jevver think?—the world's best men  
Wears the same souls they had when  
They run barefoot—'way back where  
All these little childern air.

Heerd a boy, not long ago,  
Say his parents *sassed* him so,  
He'd *correct* 'em ef he could,—  
Then be good ef *they'd* be good.



## THE HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN

**I** BELIEVE *all* children's good,  
Ef they're only *understood*,—  
Even *bad* ones 'pears to me  
'S jes' as good as they kin bel



## THE NINE LITTLE GOBLINS

**T**HEY all climbed up on a high board-fence—  
Nine little goblins, with green-glass eyes—  
Nine little goblins that had no sense,  
And couldn't tell coppers from cold mince-pies;  
And they all climbed up on the fence, and sat—  
And I asked them what they were staring at.

And the first one said, as he scratched his head  
With a queer little arm that reached out of his ear  
And rasped its claws in his hair so red—  
"This is what this little arm is fer!"  
And he scratched and stared, and the next one said,  
"How on earth do *you* scratch your head?"

And he laughed like the screech of a rusty hinge—  
Laughed and laughed till his face grew black;  
And when he choked, with a final twinge  
Of his stifling laughter, he thumped his back  
With a fist that grew on the end of his tail  
Till the breath came back to his lips so pale.

And the third little goblin leered round at me—  
And there were no lids on his eyes at all—  
And he clucked one eye, and he says, says he,  
“What is the style of your socks this fall?”  
And he clapped his heels—and I sighed to see  
That he had hands where his feet should be.

Then a bald-faced goblin, gray and grim,  
Bowed his head, and I saw him slip  
His eyebrows off, as I looked at him,  
And paste them over his upper lip;  
And then he moaned in remorseful pain—  
“Would—ah, would I’d me brows again!”

And then the whole of the goblin band  
Rocked on the fence-top to and fro,  
And clung, in a long row, hand in hand,  
Singing the songs that they used to know—  
Singing the songs that their grandsires sung  
In the goo-goo days of the goblin-tongue.

And ever they kept their green-glass eyes  
Fixed on me with a stony stare—  
Till my own grew glazed with a dread surmise,  
And my hat whooped up on my lifted hair,  
And I felt the heart in my breast snap to,  
As you've heard the lid of a snuff-box do.

And they sang: "You're asleep! There is no board-  
fence,  
And never a goblin with green-glass eyes!—  
'Tis only a vision the mind invents  
After a supper of cold mince-pies,—  
And you're doomed to dream this way," they  
said,—  
*"And you shan't wake up till you're clean plum  
dead!"*





## THE PIXY PEOPLE

**I**T was just a very  
Merry fairy dream!—  
All the woods were airy  
With the gloom and gleam;  
Crickets in the clover  
Clattered clear and strong,  
And the bees droned over  
Their old honey-song.

In the mossy passes,  
Saucy grasshoppers  
Leapt about the grasses  
And the thistle-burs;  
And the whispered chuckle  
Of the katydid  
Shook the honeysuckle  
Blossoms where he hid.

Through the breezy mazes  
Of the lazy June,  
Drowsy with the hazes  
Of the dreamy noon,  
Little Pixy people  
Winged above the walk,  
Pouring from the steeple  
Of a mullein-stalk.

One—a gallant fellow—  
Evidently King,—  
Wore a plume of yellow  
In a jewelled ring  
On a pansy bonnet,  
Gold and white and blue,  
With the dew still on it,  
And the fragrance, too.

One—a dainty lady—  
Evidently Queen,—  
Wore a gown of shady  
Moonshine and green,  
With a lace of gleaming  
Starlight that sent  
All the dewdrops dreaming  
Everywhere she went.

One wore a waistcoat  
Of roseleaves, out and in,  
And one wore a faced-coat  
Of tiger-lily-skin;  
And one wore a neat coat  
Of palest galingale;  
And one a tiny street-coat,  
And one a swallow-tail.

And Ho! sang the King of them  
And Hey! sang the Queen;  
And round and round the ring of them  
Went dancing o'er the green;  
And Hey! sang the Queen of them,  
And Ho! sang the King—  
And all that I had seen of them  
—Wasn't anything!

It was just a very  
Merry fairy dream!—  
All the woods were airy  
With the gloom and gleam;  
Crickets in the clover  
Clattered clear and strong,  
And the bees droned over  
Their old honey-song!

## THE PRAYER PERFECT

**D**EAR Lord! kind Lord!  
Gracious Lord! I pray  
Thou wilt look on all I love,  
Tenderly to-day!  
Weed their hearts of weariness;  
Scatter every care  
Down a wake of angel-wings  
Winnowing the air.

Bring unto the sorrowing  
All release from pain;  
Let the lips of laughter  
Overflow again;  
And with all the needy  
O divide, I pray,  
This vast treasure of content  
That is mine to-day!

## REACH YOUR HAND TO ME

**R**EACH your hand to me, my friend,  
With its heartiest caress—  
Sometime there will come an end  
To its present faithfulness—  
Sometime I may ask in vain  
For the touch of it again,  
When between us land or sea  
Holds it ever back from me.

Sometime I may need it so,  
Groping somewhere in the night,  
It will seem to me as though  
Just a touch, however light,  
Would make all the darkness day,  
And along some sunny way  
Lead me through an April-shower  
Of my tears to this fair hour.

O the present is too sweet  
To go on forever thus!  
Round the corner of the street  
Who can say what waits for us?—  
Meeting—greeting, night and day,  
Faring each the selfsame way—  
Still somewhere the path must end—  
Reach your hand to me, my friend!



## MAX AND JIM

**M**AX an' Jim,  
They're each other's  
Fat an' slim  
Little brothers.

Max is thin,  
An' Jim, the fac's is,  
Fat ag'in  
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed  
He don't know whuther  
He's most proud  
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says  
They're both so sweet—'m!—  
That she guess  
She'll haf to *eat* 'em!





## THE SCHOOLBOY'S FAVORITE

**O**VER the river and through the wood  
Now Grandmother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah for the fun!—Is the pudding done?  
Hurrah for the pumpkin pie!

—SCHOOL READER.

Fer any boy 'at's little as me,  
Er any little girl,  
That-un's the goodest poetry piece  
In any book in the worl'!  
An' ef grown-peoples wuz little ag'in  
I bet they'd say so, too,  
Ef *they'd* go see *their* old Gran'ma,  
Like our Pa lets *us* do!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' 'll tell you why 'at's the goodest piece:—  
'Cause it's ist like *we* go  
To *our* Gran'ma's, a-visitun there,  
When our Pa he says so;  
'An' Ma she fixes my little cape-coat  
An' little fuzz-cap; an' Pa  
He tucks me away—an' yells "Hoo-ray!"—  
'An' whacks Old Gray, an' drives the sleigh  
Fastest you ever saw!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' Pa ist snuggles me 'tween his knees—  
An' I he'p hold the lines,  
An' peek out over the buffalo-robe;—  
An' the wind ist *blows!*—an' the snow ist *snows!*  
An' the sun ist shines! an' shines! —  
An' th' ole horse tosses his head an' coughs  
The frost back in our face,—  
An' I'd ruther go to my Gran'ma's  
Than any other place!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' all the peoples they is in town  
Watches us whizzin' past  
To go a-visitun our Gran'ma's,  
Like we all went there last;—  
But *they* can't go, like *ist our* folks  
An' Johnny an' Lotty, and three  
Er four neighbor childerns, an' Rober-ut Volney,  
An' Charley an' Maggy an' me!

*Over the river an' through the wood  
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:  
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—  
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*





## THE OLD TRAMP

**A'** OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,  
An' The Raggedy Man he caught  
An' roust him up, an' chased him off  
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old Tramp hollered back an' said,—  
“You're a *purty* man!—*You* air!—  
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,  
An' a nose like a Bartlutt pear!”



## AN IMPETUOUS RESOLVE

**W**HEN little Dickie Swope's a man,  
He's go' to be a Sailor;  
'An' little Hamey Tincher, he's  
A-go' to be a Tailor:  
Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be  
A stylish Carriage-Maker;  
An' when *I* grow a grea'-big man,  
I'm go' to be a Baker!

An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit  
O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it  
An' buy as fine a double-rig  
As ever Bud kin make it:  
An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,  
An' we'll drive off togevver,  
A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road  
Ferever an' ferever!



## GRANNY

**G**RANNY'S come to our house,  
And ho! my lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,  
And Wade and Silas-Walker  
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,  
And Pollos on the rocker;  
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,  
And little Orphant Annie,  
All's a-eatin' gingerbread  
'And giggle-un at Granny!

Tells us all the fairy tales  
Ever thought er wundered—  
And 'bundance o' other stories—  
Bet she knows a hunderd!—  
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"  
And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!  
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,  
Listenun' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;  
And "Bean-Stalk" 's another!—  
So's the one of "Cinderell" "  
And her old godmother;—  
That-un's best of all the rest—  
Bestest one of any,—  
Where the mices scampers home,  
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,  
Ho! my lawzy-daisy!  
All the childern round the place  
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!  
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,  
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,  
And fetched a pear fer all the pack  
That runs to kiss their Granny!

## THE ORCHARD LANDS OF LONG AGO

**T**HE orchard lands of Long Ago!  
O drowsy winds, awake, and blow  
The snowy blossoms back to me,  
And all the buds that used to be!  
Blow back along the grassy ways  
Of truant feet, and lift the haze  
Of happy summer from the trees  
That trail their tresses in the seas  
Of grain that float and overflow  
The orchard lands of Long Ago!

Blow back the melody that slips  
In lazy laughter from the lips  
That marvel much if any kiss  
Is sweeter than the apple's is.  
Blow back the twitter of the birds—  
The lisp, the titter, and the words  
Of merriment that found the shine  
Of summer-time a glorious wine  
That drenched the leaves that loved it so,  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!

O memory! alight and sing  
Where rosy-bellied pippins cling,  
And golden russets glint and gleam,  
As, in the old Arabian dream,  
The fruits of that enchanted tree  
The glad Aladdin robbed for me!  
And, drowsy winds, awake and fan  
My blood as when it overran  
A heart ripe as the apples grow  
In orchard lands of Long Ago!



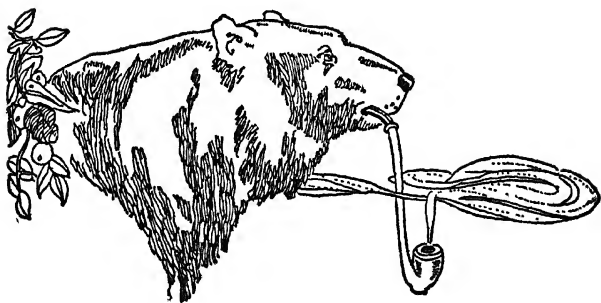
## A BEAR FAMILY

**W**UNZT, 'way West in Illinoise,  
Wuz two Bears an' their two boys:  
An' the two boys' names, you know,  
Wuz—like *ours* is,—Jim an' Jo;  
An' their parunts' names wuz same's  
All big grown-up people's names,—  
Ist *Miz* Bear, the neighbors call  
'Em, an' *Mister* Bear—'at's all.  
Yes—an' *Miz* Bear scold him, too,  
Ist like grown folks *shouldn't* do!  
Wuz a grea'-big river there,  
An', 'crosst that, 's a mountain where  
Old Bear said some day he'd go,  
Ef she don't quit scoldin' so!  
So, one day when he been down  
The river, fishin', 'mos\* to town,

An' come back 'thout no fish a-tall,  
 An' Jim and Jo they run an' bawl  
 An' tell their ma their pa hain't fetch'  
 No fish,—she scold again an' ketch  
 Her old broom up an' biff him, too.—  
 An' he ist cry, an' say, "Boo-hoo!  
 I *told* you what I'd do some day!"  
 An' he ist turned an' runned away  
 To where's the grea'-big river there,  
 An' ist *splunged* in an' swum to where  
 The mountain's at, 'way th' other side,  
 An' clumbed up there. An' Miz Bear *cried*—  
 'An' little Jo an' little Jim—  
 Ist like their ma—bofe cried fer him!—  
 But he clumbed on, *clean out o' sight*,  
 He wuz so mad!—An' served 'em right!  
 Nen—when the Bear got 'way on top  
 The mountain, he heard somepin' flop  
 Its wings—an' somepin' else he heerd  
 A-rattlin'-like.—An' he wuz *skeered*,  
 An' looked 'way up, an'—*Mercy sake!*  
 It wuz a' Eagul an' a *snake!*  
 An'-sir, the Snake, he bite an' kill'  
 The Eagul, an' they bofe fall till  
 They strike the ground—*k'spang-k'spat!*  
 Wite where the Bear wuz standin' at!  
 An' when herè come the Snake at *him*,

The Bear he think o' little Jim  
 An' Jo, he did—an' their ma, too,—  
 All safe at home,—an' he ist flew  
 Back down the mountain—an' could hear  
 The old Snake rattlin', sharp an' clear,  
 Wite clos't behind!—An' Bear he's so  
 All tired out, by time, you know,  
 He git down to the river there,  
 He know' he can't *swim* back to where  
 His folks is at. But ist wite nen  
 He see a boat an' six big men  
 'At's been a-shootin' ducks: An' so  
 He skeered them out the boat, you know,  
 An' ist jumped in—an' Snake *he* tried  
 To jump in, too, but falled outside  
 Where all the water wuz; an' so  
 The Bear grabs one the things you row  
 The boat wiv an' ist whacks the head  
 Of the old Snake an' kills him dead!—  
 An' when he's killed him dead, w'y, nen  
*The old Snake's drowned dead again!*  
 Nen Bear set in the boat an' bowed  
 His back an' rowed—an' rowed—an' rowed—  
 Till he's safe home—so tired he can't  
 Do nothin' but lay there an' pant  
 An' tell his childern, "Bresh my coat!"

An' tell his wife, "Go chain my boat!"  
An' they're so glad he's back, they say  
"They *knowed* he's comin' thataway  
To ist su'prise the dear ones there!"  
An' Jim an' Jo they dried his hair  
An' pulled the burs out; an' their ma  
She ist set there an' helt his paw  
Till he wuz sound asleep, an' nen  
She telled him she won't scold again—  
Never—never—never—  
Ferever an' ferever!





## THE BUMBLEBEE

**Y**OU better not fool with a Bumblebee!—  
Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!  
They're lazy to look at, an' kindo' go  
Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,  
An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,  
Danglin' their legs as they drone about  
The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in  
'Ithout ist a-tumble-un out ag'in!  
Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way  
In a jimson-blossom, I did, one day,—  
An' I ist *grabbed* it—an' nen let go—  
An' "*Ooh-ooh! Honey! I told ye so!*"  
Says the Raggedy Man; an' he ist run  
An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,  
An' says: "They *has* be'n folks, I guess,  
'At thought I wuz predjudust more er less,—  
Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumblebee  
Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!"



## THE TOY PENNY-DOG

**M**A put my Penny-Dog  
Safe on the shelf,  
An' left no one home but him,  
Me an' myself;  
So I clumbed a big chair  
I pushed to the wall—  
But the Toy Penny-Dog  
Ain't there at all!  
I went back to Dolly—  
An' *she* 'uz gone too,  
An' little Switch 'uz layin' there;—  
An' Ma says "*Boo!*"—  
An' there she wuz a-peepin'  
Through the front-room door:  
An' I ain't goin' to be bad  
Little girl no more!



## OUR BETSY

**U**S childern 's all so lonesome  
We hardly want to *play*  
Or skip or swing or anything,—  
'Cause Betsy she's away!

She's gone to see her people  
At her old home.—But then—  
Oh! ev'ry child 'll jist be wild  
When she's back here again!

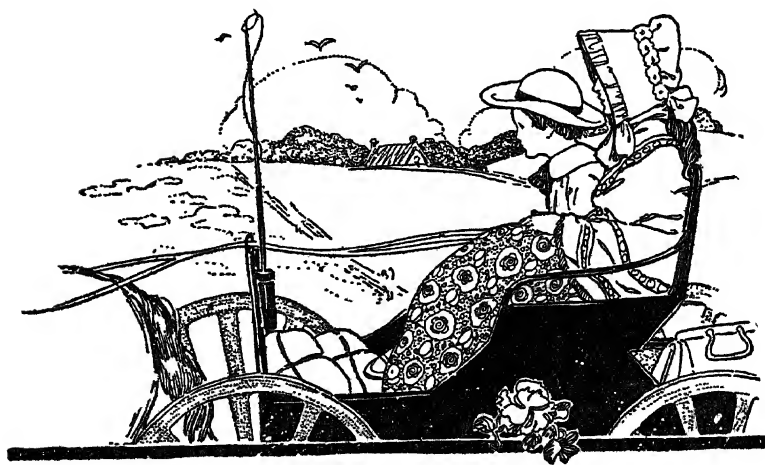
*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—  
Wwhopty-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*

She's like a mother to us,  
And like a sister, too—  
Oh! she's as sweet as things to eat  
When all the dinner 's through!  
And hey! to hear her laughin'!  
And ho! to hear her sing!—  
To have her back is all we lack  
Of havin' *ev'rything!*

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—  
Woopty-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*

Oh! some may sail the northern lakes,  
And some to foreign lands,  
And some may seek old Nameless Creek,  
Or India's golden sands;  
Or some may go to Kokomo,  
And some to Mackinac,—  
But I'll go down to Morgantown  
To fetch our Betsy back.

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—  
Woopty-dooden then!  
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,  
When Betsy's back again!*





## LULLABY

**T**HE maple strews the embers of its leaves  
O'er the laggard swallows nestled 'neath the  
eaves

And the moody cricket falters in his cry—

Baby-bye!—

And the lid of night is falling o'er the sky—

Baby-bye!—

The lid of night is falling o'er the sky!

The rose is lying pallid, and the cup

Of the frosted calla-lily folded up;

And the breezes through the garden sob and sigh—

Baby-bye!—

O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie—

Baby-bye!—

O'er the sleeping blooms of summer where they lie!

Yet, Baby—O my Baby, for your sake

This heart of mine is ever wide awake,

And my love may never droop a drowsy eye—

Baby-bye!—

Till your own are wet above me when I die—

Baby-bye!—

Till your own are wet above me when I die.

## THE DAYS GONE BY

**O** THE days gone by! O the days gone by!  
The apples in the orchard, and the pathway  
through the rye;  
The chirrup of the robin, and the whistle of the quail  
As he piped across the meadows sweet as any night-  
ingale;  
When the bloom was on the clover, and the blue was in  
the sky,  
And my happy heart brimmed over, in the days gone by.

In the days gone by, when my naked feet were tripped  
By the honeysuckle tangles where the water-lilies  
dipped,  
And the ripples of the river lipped the moss along the  
brink  
Where the placid-eyed and lazy-footed cattle came to  
drink,  
And the tilting snipe stood fearless of the truant's way-  
ward cry  
And the splashing of the swimmer, in the days gone by.

O the days gone by! O the days gone by!  
The music of the laughing lip, the luster of the eye;  
The childish faith in fairies, and Aladdin's magic ring—  
The simple, soul-reposing, glad belief in every thing,—  
When life was like a story holding neither sob nor sigh,  
In the golden olden glory of the days gone by.



## LITTLE COUSIN JASPER

**L**ITTLE Cousin Jasper, he  
Don't live in this town, like me,—  
He lives 'way to Rensselaer,  
An' ist comes to visit here.

He says 'at our court-house square  
Ain't nigh big as theirn is there!—  
He says their town's big as four  
Er five towns like this, an' more!

He says ef his folks moved here  
He'd cry to leave Rensselaer—  
'Cause they's prairie there, an' lakes,  
An' wile-ducks an' rattlesnakes!

Yes, 'n' little Jasper's Pa  
Shoots most things you ever saw!—  
Wunst he shot a deer, one day,  
'At swummed off an' got away.

Little Cousin Jasper went  
An' camped out wunst in a tent  
Wiv his Pa, an' helt his gun  
While he kilt a turrapun.

An' when his Ma heerd o' that,  
An' more things his Pa's bin at,  
She says, "Yes, 'n' he'll git shot  
'Fore he's man-grown, like as not!"

An' they's mussrats there, an' minks,  
An' di-dippers, an' chee-winks,—  
Yes, 'n' cal'mus-root you chew  
All up an' 't 'on't pizen you!

An', in town, 's a flag-pole there—  
Highest one 'at's anywhere  
In this world!—wite in the street  
Where the big mass-meetin's meet.

Yes, 'n' Jasper he says they  
Got a brass band there, an' play  
On it, an' march up an' down  
An' all over round the town!

Wisht our town ain't like it is!—  
Wisht it's ist as big as his!  
Wisht 'at *his* folks they'd move *here*,  
An' *we'd* move to Rensselaer!



## IRY AND BILLY AND JO

A TINTYPE

**I**RY an' Billy an' Jo!—  
Iry an' Billy's *the boys*,  
An' Jo's their *dog*, you know,—  
Their pictur's took all in a row.  
Bet they kin kick up a noise—  
Iry an' Billy, the boys,  
An' that-air little dog Jo!

*Iry's* the one 'at stands  
Up there a-lookin' so mild  
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,  
Like such a '*bediant* child—  
(*Sakes-alive!*) —An' *Billy* he sets  
In the cheer an' holds on to Jo an' *sweats*  
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!  
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,  
 Usen to jes' turn in  
 An' fight over that dog Jo  
 Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—  
 Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!  
 That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—  
 An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—  
 'Cause the dog wuz *hisn!*—An' at it they'd go,  
 Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toe-nail, you know—  
 Iry an' Billy an' Jo!  
 But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)—  
 He 'tended-like 'at he *jerked 'em up;*  
 An' got a jury o' Brick-yard men  
 An' helt a *trial* about the pup:  
 An' *he* says *he* jes' like to 'a' died  
 When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—  
 Regardin', you know,  
 Iry an' Billy an' Jo!  
 'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gipsies* they  
 Camped down here by the crick last Fall,  
 They brung Jo with 'em, an' give him away  
 To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—  
 So the jury fetched in the *verdict* so  
 Jo he ain't *neether* o' theirn fer *shore*—  
 He's *both* their dog, an' jes' no more!  
 An' so  
 They've quit quarrelin' long ago,  
 Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

## THE RUNAWAY BOY

**W**UNST I sassed my Pa, an' he  
Won't stand that, an' punished me,-  
Nen when he was gone that day,  
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,  
An' clumbed over our back fence  
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed  
Ever'where all down the road.



Nen I got out there, an' nen  
I runned some—an' runned again  
When I met a man 'at led  
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane  
Where was little pigs a-play'n';  
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"  
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they  
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"  
An' I ist looked ever'where,  
An' they was nobody there.

I *want* to, but I'm 'fraid to try  
To go back. . . .An' by-an'-by,  
Somepin' hurts my throat inside—  
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

Nen' a grea'-big girl come through  
Where's a gate, an' telled me who  
Am I? an' ef I tell where  
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell  
What's my *name*; an' she says well,  
An' she tooked me up an' says  
She know where I live, she guess.

Nen she telled me hug wite close  
Round her neck!—an' off she goes  
Skippin' up the street! An' nen  
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,  
Kissed the *big girl* too, an' *she*  
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*  
I won't run away no more!





## BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS-SHOW

**A**T Billy Miller's Circus-Show—  
In their old stable where it's at—  
The boys pays twenty pins to go,  
An' gits their money's-worth at that!—  
'Cause Billy he can climb an' chalk  
His stockin'-feet an' purt'-nigh walk  
A tight-rope—yes, an' ef he fall  
He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat"—'at's all!

He ain't afeard to swing an' hang  
Ist by his legs!—an' mayby stop  
An' yell "Look out!" an' nen—k-spang!—  
He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop  
Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do  
"Contortion-acts"—ist limber through  
As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes  
With shore-fer-certain circus-shows!

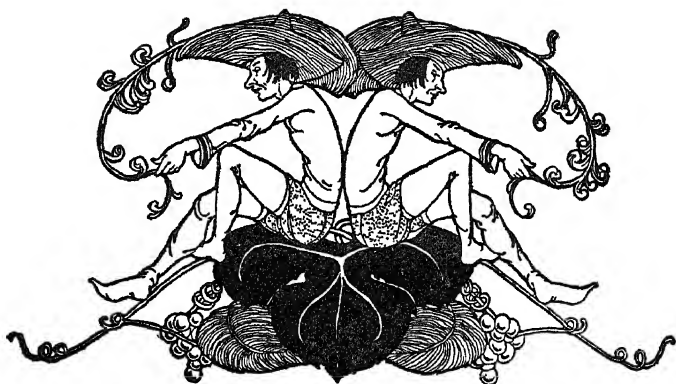
## At Billy Miller's Circus-Show

He's got a circus-ring—an' they's  
A dressin'-room,—so's he can go  
An' dress an' paint up when he plays  
He's somepin' else;—'cause sometimes he's  
"Ringmaster"—bossin' like he please—  
An' sometimes "Ephalunt"—er "Bare-  
Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes—an' the best of all!—

He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es  
All stripud,—an' white hat, all tall  
An' peakud—like in shore-'nuff shows,—  
An' got three-cornered red-marks, too,  
On his white cheeks—ist like they do!—  
An' you'd ist die, the way he sings  
An' dances an' says funny things!





## THE LAND OF USED-TO-BE

**A**ND where's the Land of Used-to-be, does little  
baby wonder?  
Oh, we will clap a magic saddle over "Pop-  
um's" knee

And ride away around the world, and in and out  
and under

The whole of all the golden sunny Summertime  
and see.

Leisurely and lazy-like we'll jostle on our journey,  
And let the pony bathe his hooves and cool them  
in the dew,

As he sidles down the shady way and lags along the  
ferny

And green grassy edges of the lane we travel  
through.

And then we'll canter on to catch the bubble of the  
thistle

As it bumps among the butterflies and glimmers  
down the sun,

To leave us laughing, all content to hear the robin  
whistle

Or guess what Katydid is saying little Katy's done.

And pausing here a minute, where we hear the  
squirrel chuckle

As he darts from out the underbrush and scampers  
up the tree,

We will gather buds and locust-blossoms, leaves and  
honeysuckle,

To wreath around our foreheads, riding into  
Used-to-be;—

For here's the very rim of it that we go swinging  
over—

Don't you hear the Fairy bugles, and the tinkle of  
the bells,

And see the baby-bumblebees that tumble in the  
clover

And dangle from the tilted pinks and tipsy pim-  
pernels?

“And don’t you see the merry faces of the daffodillies,  
And the jolly Johnny-jump-ups, and the buttercups  
a-gee,  
And the low, lolling ripples ring around the water-  
lilies?—  
All greeting us with laughter, to the Land of  
Used-to-be!

And here among the blossoms of the blooming vines  
and grasses,  
With a haze forever hanging in a sky forever  
blue,  
And with a breeze from over-seas to kiss us as it  
passes,  
We will romp around forever as the airy Elfin do!

For all the elves of earth and air are swarming here  
together—  
The prankish Puck, King Oberon, and Queen  
Titania too;  
And dear old Mother Goose herself, as sunny as the  
weather,  
Comes dancing down the dewy walks to welcome  
me and you!



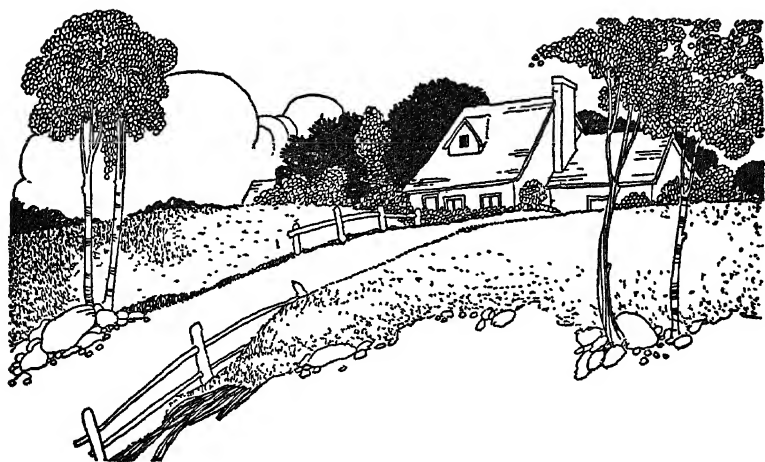
## THE CLOVER

**S**OME sings of the lilly, and daisy, and rose,  
And the pansies and pinks that the Summer-  
time throws

In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays  
Blinkin' up at the skyes through the sunshiny days;  
But what is the lilly and all of the rest  
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest  
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew  
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,  
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,  
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as plane  
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;  
And I wunder away in a barefooted dream,  
Whare I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam  
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love  
Ere it wept ore the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part  
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;  
And wharever it blossoms, oh, thare let me bow  
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;  
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,  
To go out in the clover and tell it good-by,  
And lovin'ly nestle my tace in its bloom  
While my soul slips away on a breth of purfume.



## OUT TO OLD AUNT MARY'S

**W**ASN'T it pleasant, O brother mine,  
In those old days of the lost sunshine  
Of youth—When the Saturday's chores  
were through,  
And the "Sunday's wood" in the  
kitchen, too,  
And we went visiting, "me and you,"  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's?—

"Me and you"—And the morning fair,  
With the dewdrops twinkling everywhere;  
The scent of the cherry-blossoms blown  
After us, in the roadway lone,  
Our capering shadows onward thrown—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

It all comes back so clear to-day!  
Though I am as bald as you are gray,—  
    Out by the barn-lot and down the lane  
    We patter along in the dust again,  
    As light as the tips of the drops of the rain,  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

The last few houses of the town;  
Then on, up the high creek-bluffs and down;  
    Past the squat toll-gate, with its well-sweep pole;  
    The Bridge, and "the old 'baptizin'-hole,'"—  
    Loitering, awed, o'er pool and shoal,  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

We cross the pasture, and through the wood,  
Where the old gray snag of the poplar stood,  
    Where the hammering "red-heads" hopped awry,  
    And the buzzard "raised" in the "clearing"-sky  
    And lolled and circled, as we went by  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

Or, stayed by the glint of the redbird's wings,  
Or the glitter of song that the bluebird sings,  
    All hushed we feign to strike strange trails,  
    As the "big braves" do in the Indian tales,  
    Till again our real quest lags and fails—  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.—

And the woodland echoes with yells of mirth  
That make old war-whoops of minor worth! . . .  
Where such heroes of war as we?—  
With bows and arrows of fantasy,  
Chasing each other from tree to tree  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's!

And then in the dust of the road again;  
And the teams we met, and the countrymen;  
And the long highway, with sunshine spread  
As thick as butter on country bread,  
Our cares behind, and our hearts ahead  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.—

For only, now, at the road's next bend  
To the right we could make out the gable-end  
Of the fine old Huston homestead—not  
Half a mile from the sacred spot  
Where dwelt our Saint in her simple cot—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

Why, I see her now in the open door  
Where the little gourds grew up the sides and o'er  
The clapboard roof!—And her face—ah, me!  
Wasn't it good for a boy to see—  
And wasn't it good for a boy to be  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's?—

The jelly—the jam and the marmalade,  
And the cherry and quince “preserves” she made!  
And the sweet-sour pickles of peach and pear,  
With cinnamon in ’em and all things rare!—  
And the more we ate was the more to spare,  
Out to Old Aunt Mary’s!

Ah, was there, ever, so kind a face  
And gentle as hers, or such a grace  
Of welcoming, as she cut the cake  
Or the juicy pies that she joyed to make  
Just for the visiting children’s sake—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary’s!

The honey, too, in its amber comb  
One only finds in an old farm-home;  
And the coffee, fragrant and sweet, and ho!  
So hot that we gloried to drink it so,  
With spangles of tears in our eyes, you know—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary’s.

And the romps we took, in our glad unrest!—  
Was it the lawn that we loved the best,  
With its swooping swing in the locust trees,  
Or was it the grove, with its leafy breeze,  
Or the dim haymow, with its fragrances—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary’s.

Far fields, bottom-lands, creek-banks—all,  
We ranged at will.—Where the waterfall  
Laughed all day as it slowly poured  
Over the dam by the old mill-ford,  
While the tail-race writhed, and the mill-wheel  
roared—

Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

But home, with Aunty in nearer call,  
That was the best place, after all!—  
The talks on the back porch, in the low  
Slanting sun and the evening glow,  
With the voice of counsel that touched us so,  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

And then, in the garden—near the side  
Where the beehives were and the path was wide,—  
The apple-house—like a fairy cell—  
With the little square door we knew so well,  
And the wealth inside but our tongues could tell—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

And the old spring-house, in the cool green gloom  
Of the willow trees,—and the cooler room  
Where the swinging shelves and the crocks were  
kept,  
Where the cream in a golden languor slept,  
While the waters gurgled and laughed and wept—  
Out to Old Aunt Mary's.

And as many a time have you and I—  
Barefoot boys in the days gone by—  
    Knelt, and in tremulous ecstasies  
    Dipped our lips into sweets like these,—  
    Memory now is on her knees  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.—

For, O my brother so far away,  
This is to tell you—she waits *to-day*  
    To welcome us:—Aunt Mary fell  
    Asleep this morning, whispering, “Tell  
    The boys to come.” . . . And all is well  
        Out to Old Aunt Mary's.





## THE OLD HAY-MOW

**T**HE Old Hay-mow's the place to play  
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!  
I good 'eal ruther be up there  
Than down in town, er anywhere!

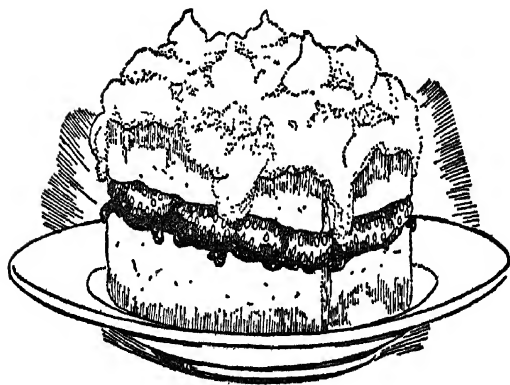
When I play in our stable-loft,  
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,  
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,  
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

An' one time wunst I *did* ferget  
To go 'tel dinner was all et,—  
An' they had short-cake—an'—Bud he  
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me.

Nen I won't let him play no more  
In our hay-mow where I keep store  
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo  
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here  
A-visitun from Rensselaer,  
An' bringed my little cousin,—*He*  
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets  
'At I can't turn no summersetts,—  
I let him come up, ef he can  
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!





## THE SQUIRT-GUN UNCLE MAKED ME

**U**NCLE SIDNEY, when he wuz here,  
Maked me a squirt-gun out o' some  
Elder-bushes 'at grewed out near  
Where wuz the brick-yard—'way out clear  
To where the Toll Gate come!

So when we walked back home again,  
He maked it, out in our woodhouse where  
Wuz the old work-bench, an' the old jack-plane,  
An' the old 'poke-shave, an' the tools all lay'n'  
Ist like he wants 'em there.

He sawed it first with the old hand-saw;  
An' nen he peeled off the bark, an' got  
Some glass an' scraped it; an' told 'bout Pa,  
When *he* wuz a boy an' fooled his Ma,  
An' the whippin' 'at he caught.

Nen Uncle Sidney, he took an' filed  
A' old arn ramrod; an' one o' the ends  
He screwed fast into the vise; an' smiled,  
Thinkin', he said, o' when he wuz a child,  
'Fore him an' Pa wuz mens.

He punched out the peth, an' nen he putt  
A plug in the end with a hole notched through;  
Nen took the old drawey-knife an' cut  
An' maked a handle 'at shoved clean shut  
But ist where yer hand held to.

An' he wropt th' uther end with some string an' white  
Piece o' the sleeve of a' old tored shirt;  
An' nen he showed me to hold it tight,  
An' suck in the water an' work it right—  
An' it 'ud ist squirt an' squirt!





## THE BOYS' CANDIDATE

**L**AS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,  
He bringed a watermelon home—  
An' half the boys in town  
Come taggin' after him.—An' he  
Says, when we et it,—“*Gracious me!*  
*'S the boy-house fell down?*”



## LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE

**L**ITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to  
stay,  
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' bresh  
the crumbs away,  
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the  
hearth, an' sweep,  
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her  
board-an'-keep;  
An' all us other childern, when the supper-things is  
done,  
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun  
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,  
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

Onc't they was a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—  
So when he went to bed at night, away up stairs,  
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd  
him bawl,

An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wasn't  
there at all!

An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby  
hole, an' press,

An' seeked him up the chimbly-flue, an' ever'wheres,  
I guess;

But all they ever found was thist his pants an' round-  
about:—

An' the Gobble-uns'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh an' grin,  
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood an' kin;  
An' onc't, when they was "company," an' ole folks  
was there,

She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't  
care!

An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an'  
hide,

They was two great big Black Things a-standin' by  
her side,

An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she  
          knowed what she's about!

An' the Gobble-uns'll git you

      Ef you

          Don't

              Watch

                  Out!

An' little Orphant Annie says when the blaze is blue,  
An' the lamp-wick sputters, an' the wind goes *woo-oo!*  
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,  
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—  
You better mind yer parunts an' yer teachers fond  
          an' dear,

An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's  
          tear,

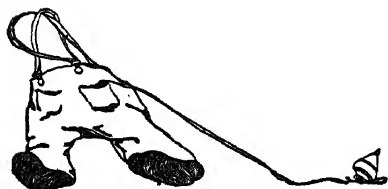
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,  
Er, the Gobble-uns'll git you

      Ef you

          Don't

              Watch

                  Out!



## A SONG OF LONG AGO

**A** SONG of Long Ago:  
Sing it lightly—sing it low—  
Sing it softly—like the lispings of the lips we  
we used to know  
When our baby-laughter spilled  
From the glad hearts ever filled  
With music blithe as robin ever trilled!

Let the fragrant summer breeze,  
And the leaves of locust-trees,  
And the apple-buds and -blossoms, and the wings of  
honey-bees,  
All palpitate with glee,  
Till the happy harmony  
Brings back each childish joy to you and me.

Let the eyes of fancy turn  
Where the tumbled pippins burn  
Like embers in the orchard's lap of tangled grass and  
fern,—  
There let the old path wind  
In and out, and on behind  
The cider-press that chuckles as we grind.

Blend in the song the moan  
Of the dove that grieves alone,  
And the wild whir of the locust, and the bumble's  
    drowsy drone;  
'And the low of cows that call  
Through the pasture-bars when all  
The landscape fades away at evenfall.

Then, far away and clear,  
Through the dusky atmosphere,  
Let the wailing of the killdee be the only sound we hear:  
O sad and sweet and low  
As the memory may know  
Is the glad-pathetic song of Long Ago!

## BILLY AND HIS DRUM

**H**O! it's come, kids, come!  
With a bim! bam! bum!  
Here's little Billy bangin' on  
his big bass drum!

He's a-marchin' round the room,  
With his feather-duster plume  
A-noddin' an' a-bobbin' with his  
bim! bam! boom!

Looky, little Jane an' Jim!  
Will you only look at him,  
A-humpin' an' a-thumpin' with his  
bam! bom! bim!

Has the Day o' Judgment come  
Er the New Mi-len-nee-um?  
Er is it only Billy with his  
bim! bam! bum!

I'm a-comin'; yes, I am—  
Jim an' Sis, an' Jane an' Sam!  
We'll all march off with Billy and his  
bom! bim! bam!

Come hurrawin' as you come,  
Er they'll think you're deaf-an'-dumb  
Ef you don't hear little Billy an' his  
big bass drum!

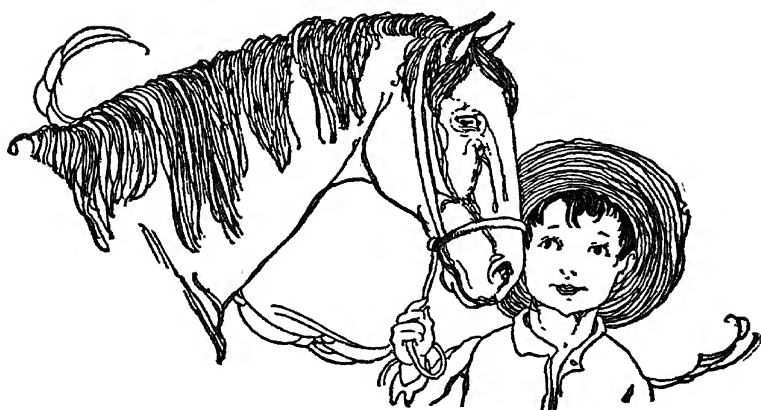


## THE BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM

**T**HE Boy lives on our Farm, he's not  
Afeard o' horses none!  
An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,  
Er rack, er pace, er run.  
Sometimes he drives two horses, when  
He comes to town an' brings  
A wagon-full o' 'taters nen,  
An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—  
An' when you drive er hitch,  
The right-un's a "near-horse," I guess,  
Er "off"—I don't know which.—  
The Boy lives on our Farm, he told  
Me, too, 'at he can see,  
By lookin' at their teeth, how old  
A horse is, to a T!

I'd be the gladdest boy alive  
Ef I knowed much as that,  
An' could stand up like him an' drive,  
An' ist push back my hat,  
Like he comes skallyhootin' through  
Our alley, with one arm  
A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—  
The Boy lives on our Farm!





## GOIN' TO THE FAIR OLD STYLE

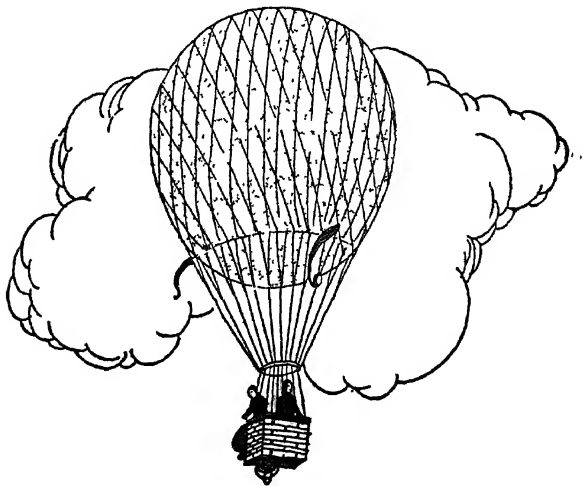
**W**HEN Me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair,  
Ma borried Mizz Rollins-uz rigg to go there,  
'Cause *our* buggy's *new*, an' Ma says, "Mercy-  
sake!

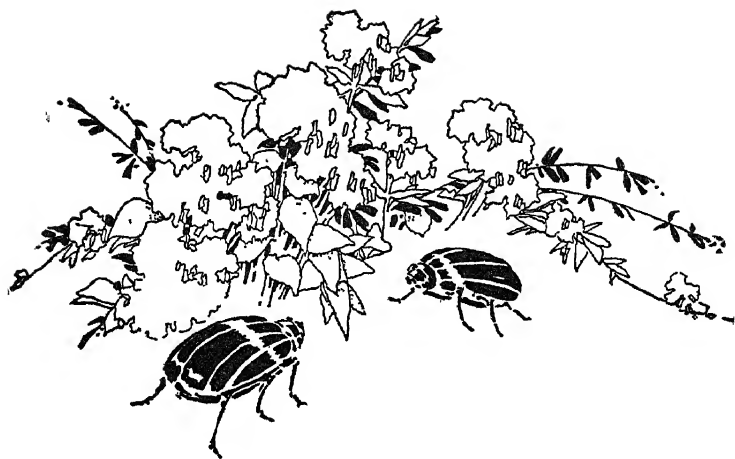
It wouldn't hold *half* the folks *she's* go' to take!"  
An' she took Marindy, an' Jane's twins, an' Jo,  
An' Auntie Van Meters-uz girls—an' old Slo'  
Magee, 'at's so fat, come a-scrugin' in there,  
When me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair!

The road's full o' loads-full 'ist ready to bu'st,  
An' all hot, an' smokin' an' chokin' with dust;  
The Wolffs an' their wagon, an' Brizentines, too—  
An' horses 'ist r'ared when the toot-cars come through!  
An' 'way from fur off we could hear the band play,  
An' peoples all there 'u'd 'ist whoop an' hooray!  
An' I stood on the dashboard, an' Pa boost' me there  
'Most high as the fence, when we went to the Fair.

An' when we 'uz there an' inside, we could see  
Wher' the flag's on a pole wher' a show's go' to be;  
An' boys up in trees, an' the grea'-big balloon  
'At didn't goned up a-tall, all afternoon!  
An' a man in the crowd there gived money away—  
An' Pa says "*he'd* ruther earn *his* by the day!"—  
An' *he* gim-me some, an' says "ain't nothin' there  
Too good fer his boy," when we went to the Fair.

Wisht the Raggedy Man wuz there, too!—but he says,  
"Don't talk fairs to *me*, child! I went to one;—yes,—  
An' there wuz a swing there ye rode—an' I rode,  
An' a thing-um-a-jing 'at ye blowed—an' I blowed;  
An' they wuz a game 'at ye played—an' I played,  
An' a hitch in the same wher' ye paid—an' I paid;  
An' they wuz *two* bad to one good peoples there—  
Like *you* an' your *Pa* an' *Ma* went to the Fair!"





## THE DOODLE BUGS'S CHARM

**W**HEN Uncle Sidney he comes here—  
An' Fred an' me an' Min,—  
My Ma she says she bet you yet  
The roof'll tumble in!

For Uncle he ist *romps* with us:

An' wunst, out in our shed,  
He telled us 'bout the Doodle-Bugs,  
An' what they'll do, he said,  
Ef you'll ist holler "Doodle-Bugs!"—  
Out by our garden-bed—  
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!  
Come up an' git some bread!"

Ain't Uncle Sidney funny man?—  
    “He's childish 'most as me”—  
My Ma sometimes she tells him that—  
    “He ac's so foolishly!”  
W'y, wunst, out in our garden-path  
    Wite by the pie-plant bed,  
He all sprawled out there in the dirt  
    An' ist scrooched down his head,  
An' “Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!”  
    My Uncle Sidney said,—  
“Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!  
    Come up an' git some bread!”

An' nen he showed us little holes  
    All bored there in the ground,  
An' little weenty heaps o' dust  
    'At's piled there all around:  
An' Uncle said, when he's like us,  
    Er purt' nigh big as Fred,  
That wuz the Doodle-Bugs's Charm—  
    To call 'em up, he said:—  
“Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!”  
    An' they'd poke out their head—  
“Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!  
    Come up an' git some bread!”



## MISTER HOP-TOAD

**H**OWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!  
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sense I seen you here-  
about.

Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?  
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!  
Plow's like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over even;  
Loam's like gingerbread, and clod's softer'n deceivin'—  
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true—Spring-time—don't you  
love it?  
You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh! oh! oh!  
I grabs up my old hoe;  
But I sees *you*,  
And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!"  
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

Make yourse'f more comfo'bler—square 'round at your  
ease—

Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below your  
knees.

Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see you  
swaller;

Straighten up and h'ist your head!—*You* don't owe a  
dollar!—

Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes, nuther;  
*You* don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd ruther.

'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I really wouldn't keer  
To swap fer life and hop right in the presidential cheer!

Oh! oh! oh!

I hauls back my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,  
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the hurry?—  
Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you back  
and smiled?—

W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like a child!  
S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you air?—  
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you wear?

Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed rowdy!—  
Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell me  
“Howdy”?

Oh! oh! oh!  
I swish round my old hoe;  
But I sees *you*,  
And s' I, “Ooh-ooh!”  
Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-dol!”





## OUR HIRED GIRL

**O**UR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;  
 An' she can cook best things to eat!  
 She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,  
 An' pours in somepin' 'at's good and sweet,  
 An' nen she salts it all on top  
 With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop  
 An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,  
 In th' old cook-stove, so's 'twon't slop  
 An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so  
 It's custard pie, first thing you know!  
 An' nen she'll say:  
 "Clear out o' my way!  
 They's time fer work, an' time fer play!—  
 Take yer dough, an' run, Child; run!  
 Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,  
An' says folks got to walk the chalk  
When *she's* around, er wisht they had,  
I play out on our porch an' talk  
To th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;  
An' he says "*Whew!*" an' nen leans on  
His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes  
An' sniffs all round an' says,—“I swawn!  
Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,  
It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!”  
An' nen *he'll* say,—  
“‘Clear out o' my way!  
They's time fer work an' time fer play!  
Take yer dough, an' run, Child; run!  
Er *she* cain't git no cookin' done!”

Wunst our hired girl, when she  
Got the supper, an' we all et,  
An' it was night, an' Ma an' me  
An' Pa went wher' the “Social” met,—  
An' nen when we come home, an' see  
A light in the kitchen-door, an' we  
Heerd a maccordeun, Pa says “Lan'-  
O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?”

An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabuth Ann  
Wuz parchin' corn fer the Raggedy Man!

*Better* say

"Clear out o' the way!

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!

Take the hint, an' run, Child; run!

Er we cain't git no *courtin'* done!"



WHEN EARLY MARCH SEEMS MIDDLE  
MAY

WHEN country roads begin to thaw  
In mottled spots of damp and dust,  
And fences by the margin draw  
Along the frosty crust  
Their graphic silhouettes, I say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When morning-time is bright with sun  
And keen with wind, and both confuse  
The dancing, glancing eyes of one  
With tears that ooze and ooze—  
And nose-tips weep as well as they,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

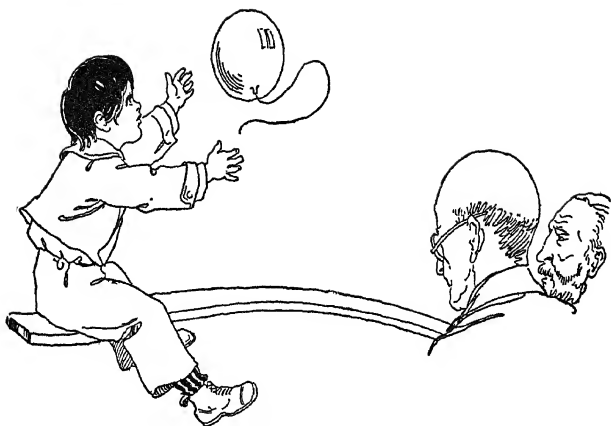
When suddenly some shadow-bird  
Goes wavering beneath the gaze,  
And through the hedge the moan is heard  
Of kine that fain would graze  
In grasses new, I smile and say,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When knotted horse-tails are untied,  
And teamsters whistle here and there,  
And clumsy mitts are laid aside  
And choppers' hands are bare,

And chips are thick where children play,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When through the twigs the farmer tramps,  
And troughs are chunked beneath the trees,  
And fragrant hints of sugar-camps  
Astray in every breeze,—  
When early March seems middle May,  
The Spring is coming round this way.

When coughs are changed to laughs, and when  
Our frowns melt into smiles of glee,  
And all our blood thaws out again  
In streams of ecstasy,  
And poets wreak their roundelay,  
The Spring is coming round this way.



### THE TOY-BALLOON

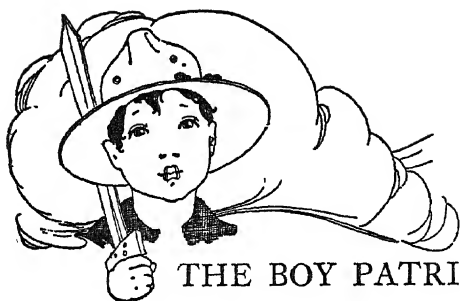
**T**HEY wuz a Big Day wunst in town,  
An' little Jason's Pa  
Bued him a little toy-balloon,  
The first he ever saw.—  
An' oh! but Jase wuz *more'n* proud,  
A-holdin' to the string  
An' scrougin' through the grea'-big crowd,  
To hear the Glee Club sing.

The Glee Club it wuz goin' to sing  
In old Masonic Hall;  
An' Speakin', it wuz in there, too,  
An' soldiers, folks an' all,  
An' Jason's Pa he git a seat  
An' set down purty soon,  
A-holdin' little Jase, an' him  
A-holdin' his balloon.

An' while the Speakin' 's startin' up  
An' ever'body still—  
The first you know wuz little Jase  
A-yellin' fit to kill!—  
Nen Jason's Pa jump on his seat  
An' grab up in the air,—  
But little Jason's toy-balloon  
Wuz clean away from there!

An' Jase he yelled; an' Jase's Pa,  
Still lookin' up, clumb down—  
While that-air little toy-balloon  
Went bumpin' roun' an' roun'  
Ag'inst the ceilin', 'way up there  
Where ever'body saw,  
An' *they* all yelled, an' *Jason* yelled  
An' little Jason's Pa!

But when his Pa he packed him out  
A-screamin'—nen the crowd  
Looked down an' hushed—till they looked up  
An' howled ag'in out loud;  
An' nen the speaker, mad an' pale,  
Jist turned an' left the stand,  
An' all j'ined in the Glee Club—"Hail,  
Columby, Happy Land!"



## THE BOY PATRIOT

**I** WANT to be a Soldier!—

A Soldier!—

A Soldier!—

I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand  
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,  
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band;  
I want to hear, high overhead, The Old Flag flap her  
wings

While all the Army, following, in chorus cheers and  
sings;

I want to hear the tramp and jar  
Of patriots a million,  
As gaily dancing off to war  
As dancing a cotillion.

*I want to be a Soldier!—*

*A Soldier!—*

*A Soldier!—*

*I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand  
Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,  
Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band.*

I want to see the battle!—

The battle!—

The battle!—

I want to see the battle, and be in it to the end;—

I want to hear the cannon clear their throats and catch the  
prattle

Of all the pretty compliments the enemy can send!—

And then I know my wits will go,—and where I *shouldn't*  
be—

Well, there's the spot, in any fight, that you may search  
for me.

So, when our foes have had their fill.

Though I'm among the dying,  
To see The Old Flag flying still,  
I'll laugh to leave her flying!

*I want to be a Soldier!—*

*A Soldier!—*

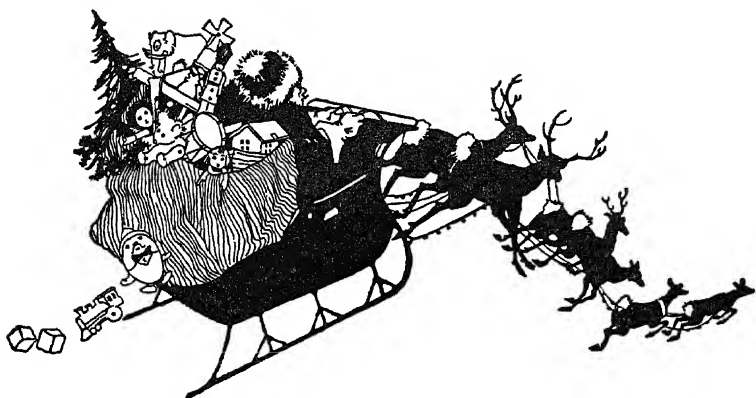
*A Soldier!—*

*I want to be a Soldier, with a saber in my hand*

*Or a little carbine rifle, or a musket on my shoulder,*

*Or just a snare-drum, snarling in the middle of the band.*





## WHAT LITTLE SAUL GOT FOR CHRISTMAS

**U**S PARENTS mostly thinks our own's  
The smartest children out!  
But widder Shelton's little Saul  
Beats all *I* know about!  
He's weakly-like—in p'int o' *health*,  
But strong in word and deed  
And heart and head, and snap and spunk,  
And allus in the lead!

Come honest' by it, fer his Pa—  
Afore he passed away—  
*He* was a leader—(Lord, I'd like  
To hear him preach to-day!)  
He led *his* flock; he led in prayer  
Fer spread o' Peace—and when  
Nothin' but *War* could spread it, he  
Was first to lead us *then*!

So little Saul has grit to take  
Things jes as they occur;  
And sister Shelton's proud o' him  
As he is proud o' her!  
And when she "got up"—jes fer him  
And little playmates all—  
A Chris'mus-tree,—they ever'one  
Was there but little Saul.—

Pore little chap was sick in bed  
Next room; and Doc was there,  
And said the childern might file past,  
But go right back to where  
The *tree* was, in the settin'-room.  
And Saul jes laid and smiled—  
Ner couldn't nod, ner wave his hand,  
It hurt so—Bless the child!

And so they left him there with Doc—  
And warm tear of his Ma's. . . .  
Then—suddent-like—high over all  
Their laughture and applause—  
They heerd,—“I don't care *what* you git  
On yer old Chris'mus-tree,  
'Cause *I'm* got somepin' *you* all haint,—  
*I'm* got the pleurisy!”

## THE ALL-GOLDEN

### I

**T**HROUGH every happy line I sing  
I feel the tonic of the Spring.  
The day is like an old-time face  
That gleams across some grassy place—  
An old-time face—an old-time chum  
Who rises from the grave to come  
And lure me back along the ways  
Of time's all-golden yesterdays.  
Sweet day! to thus remind me of  
The truant boy I used to love—  
To set, once more, his finger-tips  
Against the blossom of his lips,  
And pipe for me the signal known  
By none but him and me alone!

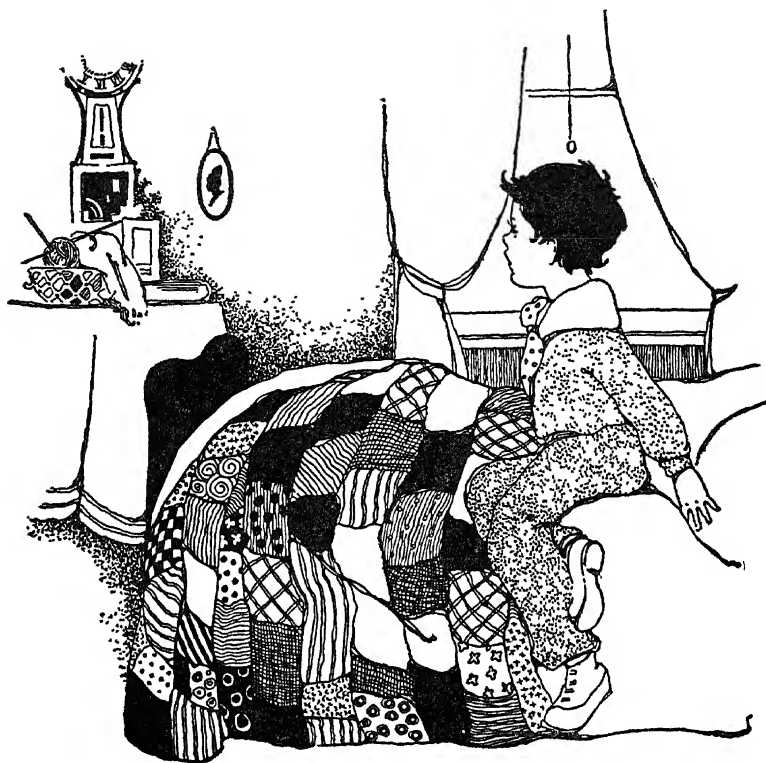
### II

I see, across the schoolroom floor,  
The shadow of the open door,  
And dancing dust and sunshine blent  
Slanting the way the morning went,  
And beckoning my thoughts afar  
Where reeds and running waters are;

Where amber-colored bayous glass  
The half-drown'd weeds and wisps of grass,  
Where sprawling frogs, in loveless key,  
Sing on and on incessantly.  
Against the green wood's dim expanse  
The cattail tilts its tufted lance,  
While on its tip—one might declare  
The white "snake-feeder" blossomed there!

### III

I catch my breath, as children do  
In woodland swings when life is new,  
And all the blood is warm as wine  
And tingles with a tang divine.  
My soul soars up the atmosphere  
And sings aloud where God can hear,  
And all my being leans intent  
To mark His smiling wonderment.  
O gracious dream, and gracious time,  
And gracious theme, and gracious rhyme—  
When buds of Spring begin to blow  
In blossoms that we used to know  
And lure us back along the ways  
Of time's all-golden yesterdays!



## NAUGHTY CLAUDE

**W**HEN Little Claude was naughty wunst  
At dinner-time, an' said  
He won't say "*Thank you*" to his Ma,  
She maked him go to bed  
An' stay two hours an' not git up,—  
So when the clock struck Two,  
Nen Claude says,—"*Thank you, Mr. Clock,*  
*I'm much obleeged to you!*"

## LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE

**L**ITTLE Mandy and her Ma  
'S porest folks you ever saw!—  
Lived in porest house in town,  
Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all—  
Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;  
And no door-knob on the door  
Outside.—*My!* but they 'uz pore!

Wuz no winder-shutters on,  
And some of the *winders* gone,  
And where *they* 'uz broke they'd pas'e  
Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

*Tell* you! when it's *winter there*,  
And the snow ist ever'where,  
Little Mandy's Ma she say  
'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Wunst my Ma and me—when we  
Be'n to church, and's goin' to be  
Chris'mus purty soon,—we went  
There—like the Committee sent.

*And-sir!* when we're in the door,  
Wuz no carpet on the floor,  
And no fire—and heels-and-head  
Little Mandy's tucked in bed!

And her Ma telled *my* Ma she  
Got no coffee but ist tea,  
And fried mush—and's all they had  
Sence her health broke down so bad.

Nen Ma hug and hold me where  
Little Mandy's layin' there;  
And she kiss her, too, and nen  
Mandy kiss my Ma again.

And my Ma she telled her *we*  
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree,  
At the Sund'y School, 'at's fer  
ALL the childern, and fer *her*.

Little Mandy *think*—nen she  
Say, "What *is* a Chris'mus-Tree?"  
Nen my Ma she gived *her* Ma  
Somepin' 'at I never saw,

And say she *must* take it,—and  
She ist maked her keep her hand  
Wite close shut,—and nen she *kiss*  
Her hand—shut ist like it is.

Nen we comed away. . . . And nen  
When it's Chris'mus Eve again,  
And all of us childerns be  
At the Church and Chris'mus-Tree—

And all git our toys and things  
'At old Santy Claus he brings  
And puts on the Tree;—wite where  
The *big* Tree 'uz standin' there,

And the things 'uz all tooked down,  
And the childerns, all in town,  
Got their presents—nen we see  
They's a *little* Chris'mus-Tree

Wite *behind* the *big* Tree—so  
We can't see till *nen*, you know,—  
And it's all ist loaded down  
With the purtiest things in town!

And the teacher smile and say:  
"This-here Tree 'at's hid away  
It's marked '*Little Mandy's Tree*.'—  
Little Mandy! Where is she?"

Nen nobody say a word.—  
Stillest place you ever heard!—  
Till a man tiptoe up where  
Teacher's still a-waitin' there.

Nen the man he whispers, so  
Ist the *Teacher* hears, you know.  
Nen he tiptoe back and go  
Out the big door—ist as slow!

. . . . .

*Little Mandy*, though, *she* don't  
Answer—and Ma say "she won't  
*Never*, though each year they'll be  
'Little Mandy's Chris'mus-Tree'

Fer pore childern"—my Ma says—  
And *Committee* say they guess  
"Little Mandy's Tree" 'ull be  
Bigger than the *other* Tree!



## WET-WEATHER TALK

**I**T hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men ginerly, to all intents—  
Although they're apt to grumble some—  
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,  
And takes things as they come—  
That is, the commonality  
Of men that's lived as long as me  
Has watched the world enough to learn  
They're not the boss of this concern.

With *some*, of course, it's different—  
I've saw *young* men that knowed it all,  
And didn't like the way things went  
On this terrestchul ball;—  
But 'all the same, the rain, some way,  
Rained jest as hard on picnic day;  
Er, when they railly *wanted* it,  
It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existunce, dry and wet  
Will overtake the best of men—  
Some little skift o' clouds'll shet  
The sun off now and then.—

And mayby, whilse you're wundern who  
You've fool-like lent your umbrell' to,  
And *want* it—out'll pop the sun,  
And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggrervates the farmers, too—  
They's too much wet, er too much sun,  
Er work, er waitin' round to do  
Before the plowin' 's done:  
And mayby, like as not, the wheat,  
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,  
Will ketch the storm—and jest about  
The time the corn's a-jintin' out.

These-here *cy-clones* a-foolin' round—  
And back'ard crops!—and wind and rain!—  
And yit the corn that's wallerd down  
May elbow up again!—  
They hain't no sense, as I can see,  
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be  
A-faultin' Natchur's wise intents,  
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;  
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—  
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,  
W'y, rain's my choice.



## THE LAND OF THUS-AND-SO

“**H**OW would Willie like to go  
To the Land of Thus-and-So?  
Everything is proper there—

All the children comb their hair  
Smoother than the fur of cats,  
Or the nap of high silk hats;  
Every face is clean and white  
As a lily washed in light;  
Never vaguest soil or speck  
Found on forehead, throat or neck;  
Every little crimped ear,  
In and out, as pure and clear  
As the cherry-blossom's blow  
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

“Little boys that never fall  
Down the stair, or cry at all—  
Doing nothing to repent,  
Watchful and obedient;  
Never hungry, nor in haste—  
Tidy shoe-strings always laced;  
Never button rudely torn  
From its fellows all unworn;  
Knickerbockers always new—  
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too;  
Little watches, worn like men,  
Always promptly half-past ten—  
Just precisely right, you know,  
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

“And the little babies there  
Give no one the slightest care—  
Nurse has not a thing to do  
But be happy and sigh ‘Boo!’  
While Mamma just nods, and knows  
Nothing but to doze and doze:  
Never litter round the grate;  
Never lunch or dinner late;  
Never any household din  
Peals without or rings within—  
Baby coos nor laughing calls  
On the stairs or through the halls—  
Just Great Hushes to and fro  
Pace the Land of Thus-and-so!

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!—  
Isn't it delightful, though?"

"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me  
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—

"Must be awful nice, but I  
Ruther wait till by-and-by  
'Fore I go there—maybe when  
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—  
But"—the troubled little face  
Closer pressed in my embrace—  
"Le's don't never *ever* go  
To the Land of Thus-and-So!"





## AT AUNTY'S HOUSE

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's house—  
    'Way in the country!—where  
They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—  
    An' all's outdoors an' air!—  
An' orchurd-swing; an' churry-trees—  
An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these—  
Here redhead birds steals all they please,  
    An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—  
W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,  
    *We et out on the porch!*

Wite where the cellar-door wuz shut  
The table wuz; an' I  
Let Aunt set by me an' cut  
My vittuls up—an' pie.  
'Tuz awful funny!—I could see  
The redheads in the churry-tree,  
An' beehives, where you got to be  
So keerful, goin' by;—  
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—  
*We et out on the porch!*

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things  
'At Ma don't 'low me to—  
An' *chicken-gizzurds*—(don't like *wings*  
Like *Parunts* does! do you?)  
An' all the time the wind blowed there,  
An' I could feel it in my hair,  
An' ist smell clover *ever'*where!—  
An' a' old redhead flew  
Purt'nigh wite over my high-chair,  
*When we et on the porch!*



## LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS

**W**E got it up a-purpose, jes fer little Johnts,  
you know;  
His mother was so pore an' all, an' had  
to manage so—

Jes bein' a War-widder, an' her pension mighty slim,  
She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything, fer  
him!

An' little Johnts was puny-like, but law, *the nerve* he  
had!—

You'd want to kindo' pity him, but couldn't, very  
bad,—

His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded blue  
Kep' hintin' of his father, like, an' pity wouldn't do!

So we colloqued together, onc't, one winter-time, 'at  
we—

Jes me an' mother an' the girls, an' Wilse, John-Jack  
an' Free—

Would jine an' git up little Johnts, by time 'at  
Chris'mus come,

Some sort o' doin's, don't you know, 'at would  
su'prise him some.

An' so, all on the quiet, Mother she turns in an' gits  
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a suit; an' then sets  
down an' knits

A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—  
An' putts in a red-flannen back, an' buckle on the  
vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house,  
you see,  
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as could be,  
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnts—  
No, *Sir!*

She ust to jes declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink to  
her!"

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madaline they watched their  
chance an' rid  
To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought a  
book, they did,  
O' fairy tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair  
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-pricin'  
there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madaline, a  
drum;  
An' shootin'-crackers—Lawzy-day! an' they're so  
dangersome!

An' Piney, ever' time the rest 'ud buy some other  
toy,  
She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy fer  
the boy!

"Well," thinks-says-I, when they got back, "*your*  
pocketbooks is dry!"—  
But little Johnts was there hisse'f that afternoon,  
so I—  
Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him  
away  
By tellin' him be shore an' come to-morry—Chris'-  
mus Day—

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' how he  
scud acrost  
The fields—his towhead, in the dusk, jes like a  
streak o' frost!—  
His comfert fluttern as he run—an' old Tige, don't  
you know,  
A-jumpin' high fer rabbits an' a ploughin' up the  
snow!

It must 'a' be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got  
to bed—  
With Wilse an' John-Jack he'pin' us; an' Freeman  
in the shed,

An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed the  
Chris'mus-Tree

Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T"!

All night I dreamp' o' hearin' things a-skulkin'  
round the place—

An' "Old Kriss," with his whiskers off, an' freckles  
on his face—

An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-hosses at the  
cooper-shop,

A-stickin' down the chimbly, with their heels out at  
the top!

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plum' daylight  
an' more—

The front yard full o' neighbors all a-crowdin' round  
the door,

With Johnts's mother leadin'; yes—an' little Johnts  
hisse'f,

Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug up on the  
she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in  
to where

We'd conjered up the Chris'mus-Tree an' all the  
fixin's there!—

Fer all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands, an'  
crackin' jokes,

Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-  
folks:—

Fer, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—

An' his chin

A-wobblin'-like;—an', shore enough, at last he  
started in—

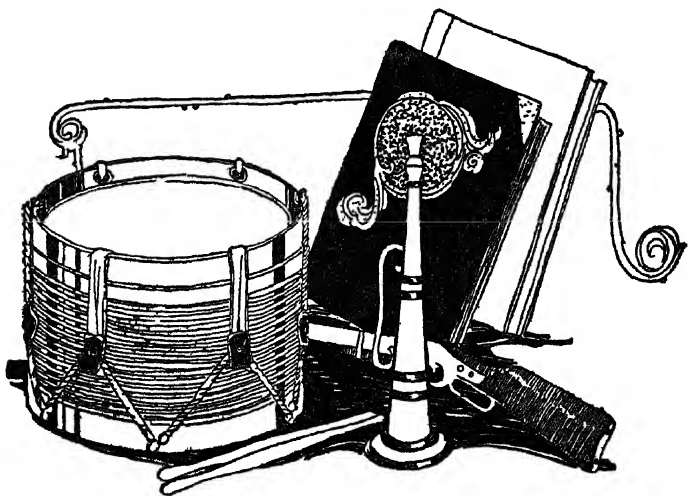
An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,  
I never heerd, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted  
ways!

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n he  
can bear—

It's all too *sudden* fer the child, an' too su'prisin'!  
—*There!*"

"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little Johnts—"I ain't  
su'prised—but I'm

A-cryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it all  
the time!"



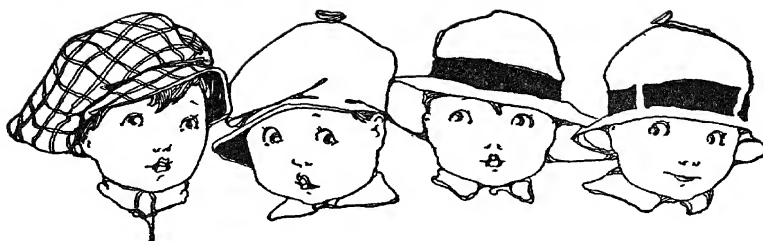
## OUR KIND OF A MAN

### I

**T**HE kind of a man for you and me!  
He faces the world unflinchingly,  
And smites, as long as the wrong resists,  
With a knuckled faith and force like fists:  
He lives the life he is preaching of,  
And loves where most is the need of love;  
His voice is clear to the deaf man's ears,  
And his face sublime through the blind man's tears;  
The light shines out where the clouds were dim,  
And the widow's prayer goes up for him;  
The latch is clicked at the hovel door  
And the sick man sees the sun once more,  
And out o'er the barren fields he sees  
Springing blossoms and waving trees,  
Feeling as only the dying may,  
That God's own servant has come that way,  
Smoothing the path as it still winds on  
Through the golden gate where his loved have gone.

## II

The kind of a man for me and you!  
However little of worth we do  
He credits full, and abides in trust  
That time will teach us how more is just.  
He walks abroad, and he meets all kinds  
Of querulous and uneasy minds,  
And, sympathizing, he shares the pain  
Of the doubts that rack us, heart and brain;  
And, knowing this, as we grasp his hand,  
We are surely coming to understand!  
He looks on sin with pitying eyes—  
E'en as the Lord, since Paradise,—  
Else, should we read, Though our sins should glow  
As scarlet, they shall be white as snow?—  
And, feeling still, with a grief half glad,  
That the bad are as good as the good are bad,  
He strikes straight out for the Right—and he  
Is the kind of a man for you and me!



## WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH

**W**HERE'S a boy a-goin',  
An' what's he goin' to do,  
An' how's he goin' to do it,  
When the world bu'sts through?  
Ma she says "she can't tell  
What we're comin' to!"  
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
Clean—plum—through!"

S'pose we'd be a-playin'  
Out in the street,  
An' the ground 'ud split up  
'Bout forty feet!—  
Ma says "she ist knows  
*We* 'ud tumble in";  
An' Pop says "he bets you  
*Nen* we wouldn't grin!"

S'pose we ist be 'tendin'  
Like we had a show,  
Down in the stable,  
Where we mustn't go,—  
Ma says, "The earthquake  
Might make it fall";  
An' Pop says, "More'n like  
Swaller barn an' all!"

Landy! ef we both wuz  
Runnin' 'way from school,  
Out in the shady woods  
Where it's all so cool!—  
Ma says "a big tree  
Might squish our head";  
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out  
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy goin',  
And what's he goin' to do,  
An' how's he goin' to do it,  
Ef the world bu'sts through?  
Ma she says "she can't tell  
What we're comin' to!"  
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered  
Clean—plum—through!"



## THE BEAR STORY

THAT ALEX "IST MAKED UP HIS-OWN-SE'F"

**W**'Y, wunst they wuz a Little Boy went out  
In the woods to shoot a Bear. So, he  
went out

'Way in the grea'-big woods—he did.—An' he  
Wuz goin' along—an' goin' along, you know,  
An' purty soon he heerd somepin' go "*Wooh!*"—  
Ist thataway—"Woo-oooh!" An' he wuz *skeered*,  
He wuz. An' so he runned an' clumbed a tree—  
A grea'-big tree, he did,—a sicka-more tree.  
An' nen he heerd it ag'in: an' he looked round,  
An' 'tuz a Bear!—a grea'-big shore-nuff Bear!—  
No: 'tuz *two* Bears, it wuz—two grea'-big Bears—  
One of 'em wuz—ist *one's* a grea'-big Bear.—  
But they ist *boff* went "*Wooh!*"—An' here *they* come  
To climb the tree an' git the Little Boy  
An' eat him up!

An' nen the Little Boy  
He 'uz *skeered* worse'n ever! An' here come

The grea'-big Bear a-climbin' th' tree to git  
The Little Boy an' eat him up—Oh, *no!*—  
It 'uzn't the *Big* Bear 'at clumb the tree—  
It 'uz the *Little* Bear. So here *he* come  
Climbin' the tree—an' climbin' the tree! Nen when  
He git wite *clos't* to the Little Boy, w'y nen  
The Little Boy he ist pulled up his gun  
An' *shot* the Bear, he did, an' killed him dead!  
An' nen the Bear he falled clean on down out  
The tree—away clean to the ground, he did—  
*Spling-splung!* he falled *plum'* down, an' killed him,  
too!

An' lit wite side o' where the *Big* Bear's at.

An' nen the Big Bear's awful mad, you bet!—  
'Cause—'cause the Little Boy he shot his gun  
An' killed the *Little* Bear.—'Cause the *Big* Bear  
He—he 'uz the Little Bear's Papa.—An' so here  
*He* come to climb the big old tree an' git  
The Little Boy an' eat him up! An' when  
The Little Boy he saw the *grea'-big* Bear  
A-comin', he 'uz badder skeered, he wuz,  
Than *any* time! An' so he think he'll climb  
Up *higher*—'way up higher in the tree  
Than the old *Bear* kin climb, you know.—But he—  
He *can't* climb higher 'an old *Bears* kin climb,—  
'Cause Bears kin climb up higher in the trees  
Than any little Boys in all the Wo-r-r-ld!

An' so here come the grea'-big Bear, he did,—  
A-climbin' up—an' up the tree, to git  
The Little Boy an' eat him up! An' so  
The Little Boy he clumbed on higher, an' higher,  
An' higher up the tree—an' higher—an' higher—  
An' higher'n iss-here *house* is!—An' here come  
Th' old Bear—clos'ter to him all the time!—  
An' nen—first thing you know,—when th' old Big  
Bear

Wuz wite clos't to him—nen the Little Boy  
Ist jabbed his gun wite in the old Bear's mouf  
An' shot an' killed him dead!—No; I *fergot*,—  
He didn't shoot the grea'-big Bear at all—  
'Cause *they 'uz no load in the gun*, you know—  
'Cause when he shot the *Little* Bear, w'y, nen  
No load 'uz anymore nen *in the gun*!

But th' Little Boy clumbed *higher* up, he did—  
He clumbed *lots* higher—an' on up *higher*—an' higher  
An' *higher*—tel he ist *can't* climb no higher,  
'Cause nen the limbs 'uz all so little, 'way  
Up in the teeny-weeny tip-top of  
The tree, they'd break down wiv him ef he don't  
Be keerful! So he stop an' think: An' nen  
He look around—*An' here come th' old Bear!*

An' so the Little Boy make up his mind  
He's got to ist git out o' there *some way*!—

'Cause here come the old Bear!—so clos't, his bref's  
 Purt' nigh so's he kin feel how hot it is  
 Ag'inst his bare feet—ist like old "Ring's" bref  
 When he's ben out a-huntin' an's all tired.  
 So when th' old Bear's so clos't—the Little Boy  
 Ist gives a grea'-big jump fer '*nother* tree—  
 No!—no he don't do that!—I tell you what  
 The Little Boy does:—W'y, nen—w'y, he—Oh, *yes*—  
 The Little Boy *he finds a hole up there*  
 '*At's in the tree*—an' climbs in there an' *hides*—  
 An' *nen* th' old Bear can't find the Little Boy  
 At all!—But, purty soon th' old Bear finds  
 The Little Boy's *gun* 'at's up there—'cause the *gun*  
 It's too *tall* to tooked wiv him in the hole.  
 So, when the old Bear fin' the *gun*, he knows  
 The Little Boy's ist *hid* 'round *somers* there,—  
 An' th' old Bear 'gins to snuff an' sniff around,  
 An' sniff an' snuff around—so's he kin find  
 Out where the Little Boy's hid at.—An' *nen*—*nen*—  
 Oh, *yes*!—W'y, purty soon the old Bear climbs  
 'Way out on a big limb—a grea'-long limb,—  
 An' *nen* the Little Boy climbs out the hole  
 An' takes his ax an' chops the limb off! . . . Nen  
 The old Bear falls *k-splunge!* clean to the ground  
 An' bust an' kill hisse'f plum' dead, he did!

An' *nen* the Little Boy he git his gun  
 An' 'menced a-climbin' down the tree ag'in—

No!—no, he *didn't* git his *gun*—'cause when  
 The *Bear* falled, nen the *gun* falled, too—An' broked  
 It all to pieces, too!—An' *nicest* gun!—  
 His Pa ist buyed it!—An' the Little Boy  
 Ist cried, he did; an' went on climbin' down  
 'The tree—an' climbin' down—an' climbin' down!—  
*An'-sir!* when he 'uz purt'-nigh down,—w'y, nen  
*The old Bear he jumped up ag'in!*—an' he  
 Ain't dead at all—ist '*tendin'* thataway,  
 So he kin git the Little Boy an' eat  
 Him up! But the Little Boy he 'uz too smart  
 To climb clean *down* the tree.—An' the old Bear  
 He can't climb *up* the tree no more—'cause when  
 He fell, he broke one of his—he broke *all*  
 His legs!—an' nen he *couldn't* climb! But he  
 Ist won't go 'way an' let the Little Boy  
 Come down out of the tree. An' the old Bear  
 Ist growls 'round there, he does—ist growls an' goes  
 "*Wooh!—Woo-oooh!*" all the time! An' Little Boy  
 He haf to stay up in the tree—all night—  
 An' 'thout no *supper* neether!—On'y they  
 Wuz *apples* on the tree!—An' Little Boy  
 Et apples—ist all night—an' cried—an' cried!  
 Nen when 'tuz morning th' old Bear went "*Wooh!*"  
 Ag'in, an' try to climb up in the tree  
 An' git the Little Boy.—But he *can't*  
 Climb t'save his *soul*, he can't!—An' *oh!* he's *mad!*—  
 He ist tear up the ground! an' go "*Woo-oooh!*"

An'—*Oh, yes!*—purty soon, when morning's come  
All *light*—so's you kin *see*, you know,—w'y, nen  
The old Bear finds the Little Boy's *gun*, you know,  
'At's on the ground.—(An' it ain't broke at all—  
I ist *said* that!) An' so the old Bear think  
He'll take the gun an' *shoot* the Little Boy:—  
But *Bears they* don't know much 'bout shootin' guns;  
So when he go to shoot the Little Boy,  
The old Bear got the *other* end the gun  
Ag'in' his shoulder, 'stid o' *th'other* end—  
So when he try to shoot the Little Boy,  
It shot *the Bear*, it did—an' killed him dead!  
An' nen the Little Boy clumb down the tree  
An' chopped his old woolly head off:—Yes, an' killed  
The *other* Bear ag'in, he did—an' killed  
All *boff* the bears, he did—an' tuk 'em home  
An' *cooked* 'em, too, an' *et* 'em!

—An' that's all.



## ON THE SUNNY SIDE

**H**I and whoop-hooray, boys!  
Sing a song of cheer!  
Here's a holiday, boys,  
Lasting half a year!  
Round the world, and half is  
Shadow we have tried;  
Now we're where the laugh is,—  
On the sunny side!

Pigeons coo and mutter,  
Strutting high aloof  
Where the sunbeams flutter  
Through the stable roof.  
Hear the chickens cheep, boys,  
And the hen with pride  
Clucking them to sleep, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Hear the clacking guinea;  
Hear the cattle moo;  
Hear the horses whinny,  
Looking out at you!

On the hitching-block, boys,  
Grandly satisfied,  
See the old peacock, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Robins in the peach tree;  
Bluebirds in the pear;  
Blossoms over each tree  
In the orchard there!  
All the world's in joy, boys,  
Glad and glorified  
As a romping boy, boys,  
On the sunny side!

Where's a heart as mellow—  
Where's a soul as free—  
Where is any fellow  
We would rather be?  
Just ourselves or none, boys,  
World around and wide,  
Laughing in the sun, boys,  
On the sunny side!



## 'LIZABUTH-ANN ON BAKIN'-DAY

**O**UR Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day  
She's out o' patience allus,  
An' tells us "Hike *outdoors* an' play,  
An' when the cookies's done," she'll say,  
"Land sake! she'll come an' call us!"  
An' when the little doughbowl's all  
Ist heapin'-full, she'll come an' call—  
*Nen say*, "She ruther take a switchin'  
Than have a pack o' pesky childern  
Trackin' round the kitchen!"



## PRIOR TO MISS BELLE'S APPEARANCE

**W**HAT makes you come *here* fer, Mister,  
So much to *our* house?—*Say?*  
Come to see our big sister?—  
An' Charley he says 'at you kissed her  
An' he ketched you, th' uther day!—  
Didn' you, Charley?—But we p'omised Belle  
An' crossed our heart to never to tell—  
'Cause *she* gived us some o' them-er  
Chawk'lut drops 'at you bringed to her!

Charley he's my little b'uther—  
An' we has a-mostest fun,  
Don't we, Charley?—Our Muther,  
Whenever we whips one anuther,  
Tries to whip *us*—an' we *run*—  
Don't we, Charley?—An' nen, bime-by,  
Nen she gives us cake—an' pie—  
Don't she, Charley?—when we come in  
An' p'omise never to do it ag'in?

*He's* named Charley.—I'm *Willie*—

An' I'm got the purtiest name!

But Uncle Bob *he* calls me "Billy"—

Don't he, Charley?—'N' our filly

We named "Billy," the same

Ist like me! An' our Ma said

'At "Bob puts foolishnuss into our head!"—

Didn' she, Charley?—An' *she* don't know

Much about *boys*!—'Cause Bob said so!

Baby's a funniest feller!

Nain't no hair on his head—

*Is* they, Charley?—It's meller

Wite up there! An' ef Belle er

Us ask wuz *we* that way, Ma said,—

"Yes; an' yer *Pa's* head wuz soft as that,

An' it's that way yet!"—An' Pa grabs his hat

An' says, "Yes, childern, she's right about Pa—

'Cause that's the reason he married yer Ma!"

An' our Ma says 'at "Belle couldn'

Ketch nothin' at all but ist '*bows*'!"—

An' *Pa* says 'at "you're soft as puddun!"—

An' *Uncle Bob* says "you're a good-un

'Cause he can tell by yer nose!"—

Didn' he, Charley?—An' when Belle'll play

In the poller on th' pianer, some day,

Bob makes up funny songs about you,

Till she gits mad—like he wants her to!

Our sister *Fanny* she's '*leven*

Years old! 'At's mucher 'an *I*—  
Ain't it, Charley? . . . I'm seven!—  
But our sister *Fanny*'s in *Heaven*!

Nere's where you go ef you die!—  
Don't you, Charley?—Nen you has *wings*—  
*Ist like Fanny!*—an' *purtiest things!*—  
Don't you, Charley?—An' nen you can fly—  
*Ist fly*—an' *ever*'thing! . . . Wisht *I'd* die!





## JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

### BAD BOY'S VERSION

**T**ELL you a story—an' it's a fac':—  
Wunst wuz a little boy, name wuz Jack,  
An' he had sword an' buckle an' strap  
Maked of gold, an' a "'visibul cap";  
An' he killed Gi'nts 'at et whole cows—  
Th' horns an' all—an' pigs an' sows!  
But Jack, his golding sword wuz, oh!  
So awful sharp 'at he could go  
An' cut th' old Gi'nts clean in two  
'Fore 'ey knowed what he wuz goin' to do!

An' *one* ole Gi'nt, he had four  
Heads, an' name wuz "Bumblebore"—  
An' he wuz feared o' Jack—'cause he,  
*Jack*, he killed six—five—ten—three,  
An' all o' th' uther Gi'nts but him:  
An' thay wuz a place Jack haf to swim  
'Fore he could git t' ole "Bumblebore"—  
Nen thay wuz "griffuns" at the door:  
But Jack, he thist plunged in an' swum  
Clean acrost; an' when he come  
To th' uther side, he thist put on  
His "'visibul cap," an' nen, dog-gone!  
You couldn't see him at all!—An' so  
He slewed the "griffuns"—*boff*, you know!  
Nen wuz a horn hunged over his head,  
High on th' wall, an' words 'at read,—  
"Whoever kin this trumpet blow  
Shall cause the Gi'nt's overth'ow!"  
An' Jack, he thist reached up an' blowed  
The stuffin' out of it! an' th'owed  
Th' castul gates wide open, an'  
Nen tuk his gold sword in his han',  
An' thist marched in t' ole "Bumblebore,"  
An', 'fore he knowed, he put 'bout four  
Heads on him—an' chopped 'em off, too!—  
Wisht 'at *I'd* been Jack!—don't you?



**U**NCLE he learns us to rhyme an' write  
An' all be poets an' all recite:  
His little-est poet's his little-est niece,  
An' this is her little-est poetry-piece.



## AN OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE

**A**N Old Sweetheart of Mine!—is this her presence  
here with me,  
Or but a vain creation of a lover's memory?  
'A fair, illusive vision that would vanish into air  
Dared I even touch the silence with the whisper of a  
prayer?

Nay, let me then believe in all the blended false and  
true—

The semblance of the *old* love and the substance of the  
*new*,—

The *then* of changeless sunny days—the *now* of shower  
and shine—

But Love forever smiling,—as that old sweetheart of  
mine.

This ever-restful sense of *home*, though shouts ring in the  
hall.—

The easy-chair—the old bookshelves and prints along the  
wall;

The rare *Habanas* in their box, or gaunt churchwarden-  
stem

That often wags, above the jar, derisively at them.

As one who cons at evening o'er an album, all alone,  
And muses on the faces of the friends that he has known,  
So I turn the leaves of Fancy, till, in shadowy design,  
I find the smiling features of an old sweetheart of mine.

The lamplight seems to glimmer with a flicker of surprise,  
As I turn it low—to rest me of the dazzle in my eyes,  
And light my pipe in silence, save a sigh that seems to  
yoke

Its fate with my tobacco and to vanish with the smoke.

'Tis a *fragrant* retrospection,—for the loving thoughts  
that start

Into being are like perfume from the blossom of the heart;  
And to dream the old dreams over is a luxury divine—  
When my truant fancies wander with that old sweetheart  
of mine.

Though I hear beneath my study, like a fluttering of  
wings,

The voices of my children and the mother as she sings—  
I feel no twinge of conscience to deny me any theme  
When Care has cast her anchor in the harbor of a dream—

In fact, to speak in earnest, I believe it adds a charm  
To spice the good a trifle with a little dust of harm,—  
For I find an extra flavor in Memory's mellow wine  
That makes me drink the deeper to that old sweetheart of  
mine.

O Childhood-days enchanted! O the magic of the  
Spring!—

With all green boughs to blossom white, and all bluebirds  
to sing!

When all the air, to toss and quaff, made life a jubilee  
And changed the children's song and laugh to shrieks of  
ecstasy.

With eyes half closed in clouds that ooze from lips that  
taste, as well,  
The peppermint and cinnamon, I hear the old School-bell,  
And from "Recess" romp in again from "Blackman's"  
broken line,  
To—smile, behind my "lesson," at that old sweetheart of  
mine.

A face of lily-beauty, with a form of airy grace,  
Floats out of my tobacco as the "Genii" from the vase;  
And I thrill beneath the glances of a pair of azure eyes  
As glowing as the summer and as tender as the skies.

I can see the pink sunbonnet and the little, checkered dress  
She wore when first I kissed her and she answered the caress  
With the written declaration that, "As surely as the vine  
Grew 'round the stump," she loved me—that old sweet-  
heart of mine.

Again I make her presents, in a really helpless way,—  
The big "Rhode Island Greening"—(I was hungry too,  
that day!)

But I follow her from Spelling, with her hand behind  
her—so—

And I slip the apple in it—and the Teacher doesn't know!

I give my *treasures* to her—all,—my pencil—blue-and-  
red;—

And, if little girls played marbles, *mine* should all be *hers*  
instead!—

But *she* gave me her *photograph*, and printed "Ever Thine"  
Across the back—in blue-and-red—that old sweetheart of  
mine!

And again I feel the pressure of her slender little hand,  
As we used to talk together of the future we had  
planned,—

When I should be a poet, and with nothing else to do  
But write the tender verses that she set the music to. . . .

When we should live together in a cozy little cot  
Hid in a nest of roses, with a fairy garden-spot,  
Where the vines were ever fruited and the weather ever  
fine,  
And the birds were ever singing for that old sweetheart of  
mine. . . .

When I should be her lover forever and a day,  
And she my faithful sweetheart till the golden hair was  
gray;  
And we should be so happy that when either's lips were  
dumb  
They would not smile in Heaven till the other's kiss had  
come.

But, ah! my dream is broken by a step upon the stair,  
And the door is softly opened, and—my wife is standing  
there:

Yet with eagerness and rapture all my visions I resign,—  
To greet the *living* presence of that old sweetheart of  
mine.

## THE POEMS HERE AT HOME

**T**HE Poems here at Home!—Who'll write 'em  
down,  
Jes' as they air—in Country and in Town?  
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and lanes,  
Er these-'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—  
Who'll "voice" 'em? as I heerd a feller say  
'At speechified on Freedom, t'other day,  
And soared the Eagle tel, it 'peared to me,  
She wasn't bigger'n a bumble-bee!

Who'll sort 'em out and set 'em down, says I,  
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try  
To do 'em jestice 'thout a-foolin' some,  
And headin' facts off when they want to come?—  
Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and brain  
To reco'nize 'at nothin's made in vain—  
'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds  
And brutes first choice, and us-folks afterwards?

What We want, as I sense it, in the line  
O' poetry is somepin' Yours and Mine—  
Somepin' with live stock in it, and out-doors,  
And old crick-bottoms, snags, and sycamores:  
Putt weeds in—pizen-vines, and underbresh,  
As well as johnny-jump-ups, all so fresh  
And sassy-like!—and groun'-squir'ls,—yes, and “We,”  
As sayin' is,—“We, Us and Company!”

Putt in old Nature's sermons,—them's the best,—  
And 'casion'ly hang up a hornets' nest  
'At boys 'at's run away from school can git  
At handy-like—and let 'em tackle it!  
Let us be wrought on, of a truth, to feel  
Our proneness fer to hurt more than we heal,  
In ministratin' to our vain delights—  
Fergittin' even insecs has their rights!

No “Ladies' Amaranth,” ner “Treasury” book—  
Ner “Night Thoughts,” nuther—ner no “Lally Rook”!  
We want some poetry 'at's to Our taste,  
Made out o' truck 'at's jes' a-goin' to waste  
'Cause smart folks thinks it's altogether too  
Outrageous common—'cept fer me and you!—  
Which goes to argy, all sich poetry  
Is 'bliged to rest its hopes on You and Me.

## OLD OCTOBER

OLD October's purt' nigh gone,  
And the frosts is comin' on  
Little *heavier* every day—  
Like our hearts is thataway!  
Leaves is changin' overhead  
Back from green to gray and red  
Brown and yellor, with their stems  
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;  
And the balance of the trees  
Gittin' balder every breeze—  
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!  
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

I love Old October so,  
I can't bear to see her go—  
Seems to me like losin' some  
Old-home relative er chum—  
'Pears like sort o' settin' by  
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh  
Was a-passin' out o' sight  
Into everlastin' night!

Hickernuts a feller hears  
Rattlin' down is more like tears  
Drappin' on the leaves below—  
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about  
Old October knocks me out!—  
I sleep well enough at night—  
And the blamedest appetite  
Ever mortal man possessed,—  
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—  
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,  
'Iles and limbers up my jaws  
Fer raal service, sich as new  
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—  
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout  
Old October knocks me out!

## THE TREE-TOAD

“‘**S**CUR’OUS-LIKE,” said the tree-toad,  
“I’ve twittered fer rain all day;  
And I got up soon,  
And hollered tel noon—  
But the sun, hit blazed away,  
Tel I jest clumb down in a crawfish-hole,  
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

“Dozed away fer an hour,  
And I tackled the thing ag’in:  
And I sung, and sung,  
Tel I knowed my lung  
Was jest about give in;  
And *then*, thinks I, ef hit don’t rain *now*,  
They’s nothin’ in singin’, anyhow!

\*“Onc’t in a while some farmer  
Would come a-drivin’ past;  
And he’d hear my cry,  
And stop and sigh—  
Tel I jest laid back, at last,  
And I hollered rain tel I thought my th’oat  
Would bust wide open at ever’ note!

“But I *fetch*ed her!—O *I fetch*ed her!—  
’Cause a little while ago,  
As I kindo’ set,  
With one eye shet,  
And a-singin’ soft and low,  
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,  
A-sayin’,—‘*Ef you’ll jest hush I’ll rain!*’ ”

## A BAREFOOT BOY

**A** BAREFOOT boy! I mark him at his play—  
For May is here once more, and so is he,—  
His dusty trousers, rolled half to the knee,  
And his bare ankles grimy, too, as they:  
Cross-hatchings of the nettle, in array  
Of feverish stripes, hint vividly to me  
Of woody pathways winding endlessly  
Along the creek, where even yesterday  
He plunged his shrinking body—gasped and shook—  
Yet called the water “warm,” with never lack  
Of joy. And so, half enviously I look  
Upon this graceless barefoot and his track,—  
His toe stubbed—ay, his big toe-nail knocked back  
Like unto the clasp of an old pocketbook.

## A COUNTRY PATHWAY

I COME upon it suddenly, alone—  
A little pathway winding in the weeds  
That fringe the roadside; and with dreams my  
own,  
I wander as it leads.

Full wistfully along the slender way,  
Through summer tan of freckled shade and shine,  
I take the path that leads me as it may—  
Its every choice is mine.

A chipmunk, or a sudden-whirring quail,  
Is startled by my step as on I fare—  
A garter-snake across the dusty trail  
Glances and—is not there.

Above the arching jimson-weeds flare twos  
And twos of sallow-yellow butterflies,  
Like blooms of lorn primroses blowing loose  
When autumn winds arise.

The trail dips—dwindles—broadens then, and lifts  
Itself astride a cross-road dubiously,  
And, from the fennel marge beyond it, drifts  
Still onward, beckoning me.

And though it needs must lure me mile on mile  
Out of the public highway, still I go,  
My thoughts, far in advance in Indian-file,  
Allure me even so.

Why, I am as a long-lost boy that went  
At dusk to bring the cattle to the bars,  
And was not found again, though Heaven lent  
His mother all the stars

With which to seek him through that awful night.  
O years of nights as vain!—Stars never rise  
But well might miss their glitter in the light  
Of tears in mother-eyes!

So—on, with quickened breaths, I follow still—  
My avant-courier must be obeyed!  
Thus am I led, and thus the path, at will,  
Invites me to invade

A meadow's precincts, where my daring guide  
Clambers the steps of an old-fashioned stile,  
And stumbles down again, the other side,  
To gambol there awhile

In pranks of hide-and-seek, as on ahead  
I see it running, while the clover-stalks  
Shake rosy fists at me, as though they said—  
“You dog our country-walks

“And mutilate us with your walking-stick!—  
We will not suffer tamely what you do,  
And warn you at your peril,—for we'll sic  
Our bumblebees on you!”

But I smile back, in airy nonchalance,—  
The more determined on my wayward quest,  
As some bright memory a moment dawns  
A morning in my breast—

Sending a thrill that hurries me along  
In faulty similes of childish skips,  
Enthused with lithe contortions of a song  
Performing on my lips.

In wild meanderings o'er pasture wealth—  
Erratic wanderings through dead'ning-lands,  
Where sly old brambles, plucking me by stealth,  
Put berries in my hands:

Or the path climbs a boulder—wades a slough—  
Or, rollicking through buttercups and flags,  
Goes gaily dancing o'er a deep bayou  
On old tree-trunks and snags:

Or, at the creek, leads o'er a limpid pool  
Upon a bridge the stream itself has made,  
With some Spring-freshet for the mighty tool  
That its foundation laid.

I pause a moment here to bend and muse,  
With dreamy eyes, on my reflection, where  
A boat-backed bug drifts on a helpless cruise,  
Or wildly oars the air,

As, dimly seen, the pirate of the brook—  
The pike, whose jaunty hulk denotes his speed—  
Swings pivoting about, with wary look  
Of low and cunning greed.

Till, filled with other thought, I turn again  
To where the pathway enters in a realm  
Of lordly woodland, under sovereign reign  
Of towering oak and elm.

A puritanic quiet here reviles  
The almost whispered warble from the hedge,  
And takes a locust's rasping voice and files  
The silence to an edge.

In such a solitude my somber way  
Strays like a misanthrope within a gloom  
Of his own shadows—till the perfect day  
Bursts into sudden bloom,

And crowns a long, declining stretch of space,  
Where King Corn's armies lie with flags unfurled,  
And where the valley's dint in Nature's face  
Dimples a smiling world.

And lo! through mists that may not be dispelled,  
I see an old farm homestead, as in dreams,  
Where, like a gem in costly setting held,  
The old log cabin gleams.

\* \* \* \* \*

O darling Pathway! lead me bravely on  
Adown your valley-way, and run before  
Among the roses crowding up the lawn  
And thronging at the door,—

And carry up the echo there that shall  
Arouse the drowsy dog, that he may bay  
The household out to greet the prodigal  
That wanders home to-day.

## A FEW OF THE BIRD-FAMILY

**T**HE Old Bob-white, and Chipbird;  
The Flicker, and Chewink,  
And little hopty-skip bird  
Along the river-brink.

The Blackbird, and Snowbird,  
The Chicken-hawk, and Crane;  
The glossy old black Crow-bird,  
And Buzzard down the lane.

The Yellowbird, and Redbird,  
The Tomtit, and the Cat;  
The Thrush, and that Red*head*-bird  
The rest's all pickin' at!

The Jay-bird, and the Bluebird,  
The Sapsuck, and the Wren—  
The Cockadoodle-doo-bird,  
And our old Settin'-hen!

## A FULL HARVEST

**S**EEMS like a feller'd ort'o jes' to-day  
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,  
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,  
Seein' sich crops! I'll undertake to say  
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway  
Afore this season!—Folks is keerless, though,  
And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort'o show  
More thankfulness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey? —  
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue  
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—  
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in two  
Like honeycomb, and gaumin' it around  
The field—like it had nothin' else to do  
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

## RIGHT HERE AT HOME

**R**IGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,  
Where strangers allus joke us when they come  
And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—  
Yit *settle* here; and 'fore they realize,  
They're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and live  
Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive'!

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,  
Fer me and you and plain old happiness:  
We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—  
We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—  
We know *its* ways ain't *our* ways—so we'll stay  
Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way.

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do  
Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,  
And's got a' extry dollar, any time,  
To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb  
And's got the git-up in him to go in  
And *git there*, like he purt' nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—  
Where folks' heart's bigger'n their money-pu's';  
And where a *common* feller's jes' as good  
As any other in the neighborhood:  
The World at large don't worry you and me  
Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

Right here at home, boys—jes' right where we air!—  
Birds don't sing any sweeter anywhere:  
Grass don't grow any greener'n she grows  
Across the pastur' where the old path goes,—  
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,  
Right here at home, boys, ef we *size* 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place  
Is sacerd to us as our mother's face,  
Jes' as we rickollect her, last she smiled  
And kissed us—dyin' so and rickonciled,  
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—  
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

## OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM

I HAVE jest about decided  
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'  
Fer to work all winter, choppin'  
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!  
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—  
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like  
*Wouldn't* break!—and I wuz skeerd-like  
Clean on into *Feb'uarry*!  
Nothin' ever made me madder  
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'  
On a' extra fore-stick, sayin'  
“Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!”

## THE OLD HOME BY THE MILL

**T**HIS is "The old Home by the Mill"—fer we  
still call it so,  
Although the *old mill*, roof and sill, is all gone  
long ago.

The old home, though, and old folks—and the old spring,  
and a few  
Old cattails, weeds and hartychokes, is left to welcome  
you!

Here, Marg'et, fetch the man a tin to drink out of! Our  
spring  
Keeps kindo'-sorto' cavin' in, but don't "*taste*" anything!  
She's kindo' *agin'*, Marg'et is—"the *old* process," like  
me,  
All ham-stringed up with rhumatiz, and on in seventy-  
three.

Jes' me and Marg'et lives alone here—like in long ago;  
The childern all putt off and gone, and married, don't  
you know?

One's millin' way out West somewhare; two other  
miller-boys  
In Minnyopolis they air; and one's in Illinois.

The *oldest* gyrl—the first that went—married and died  
right here;  
The next lives in Winn's Settlement—for purt' nigh  
thirty year!  
And youngest one—was allus fer the old home here—  
but no!—  
Her man turns in and packs *her* 'way off to Idyho!

I don't miss them like *Marg'et* does—'cause I got *her*,  
you see;  
And when she pines for them—that's 'cause *she's* only  
jes' got *me*!  
I laugh, and joke her 'bout it all.—But talkin' sense, I'll  
say,  
When she was tuk so bad last Fall, I laughed then t'other  
way!

I hain't so favor'ble impressed 'bout *dyin'*; but ef I  
Found I was only second-best when *us two* come to die,  
I'd 'dopt the "new process," in full, ef *Marg'et* died, you  
see,—  
I'd jes' crawl in my grave and pull the green grass over  
*me*!

## SOME P'N COMMON-LIKE

**S**OME P'N 'at's common-like, and good  
And plain, and easy understood;  
Some p'n 'at folks like me and you  
Kin understand, and relish, too,  
And find some sermint in 'at hits  
The spot, and sticks and benefits.

We don't need nothin' extry fine;  
'Cause, take the run o' minds like mine,  
And we'll go more on good horse-sense  
Than all your flowery eloquence;  
And we'll jedge best of honest acts  
By Nature's statement of the facts.

So when you're wantin' to express  
Your misery, er happiness,  
Er anything 'at's wuth the time  
O' telling in plain talk er rhyme—  
Jes' sort o' let your subject run  
As ef the Lord wuz listenun.

## WRITIN' BACK TO THE HOME-FOLKS

**M**Y dear old friends—It jes' beats all,  
The way you write a letter  
So's ever' *last* line beats the *first*,  
And ever' *next-un*'s better!—  
W'y, ever' fool-thing you putt down  
You make so *interestin'*,  
A feller, readin' of 'em all,  
Can't tell which is the *best-un*.

It's all so comfortin' and good,  
'Pears-like I almost *hear* ye  
And git more sociabler, you know,  
And hitch my cheer up near ye  
And jes' smile on ye like the sun  
Acrosst the whole per-rairies  
In Aprile when the thaw's begun  
And country couples marries.

It's all so good-old-fashioned like  
To *talk* jes' like we're *thinkin'*,  
Without no hidin' back o' fans  
And giggle-un and winkin',  
Ner sizin' how each other's dressed—  
Like some is allus doin'—  
“*Is* Marthy Ellen's basque be'n *turned*  
Er shore-enough a new-un!”—

Er “ef Steve's city-friend hain't jes'  
‘A *leetle* kind o' sort o' ’”—  
Er “wears them-air blame' eye-glasses  
Jes' 'cause he hadn't ort to?”—  
And so straight on, *dad-libitum*,  
Tel all of us feels, *someway*,  
Jes' like our “comp'ny” wuz the best  
When we git up to come 'way!

That's why I like *old* friends like you,—  
Jes' 'cause you're so *abidin'*.—  
Ef I was built to live “*fer keeps*,”  
My principul residin'  
Would be amongst the folks 'at kep'  
Me allus *thinkin'* of 'em  
And sort o' *eechin'* all the time  
To tell 'em how I love 'em.—

Sich folks, you know, I jes' love so  
I wouldn't live without 'em,  
Er couldn't even drap asleep  
But what I *dreamp'* about 'em,—  
And ef we minded God, I guess  
We'd *all* love one another  
Jes' like one famb'ly,—me and Pap  
And Madaline and Mother.

## AT "THE LITERARY"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks  
They git all the fun they air  
Runnin' loose 'round! —but, 'y jinks!  
We' got fun, and fun to spare,  
Right out here amongst the ash-  
And oak-timber ever'where!  
Some folks else kin cut a dash  
'Sides town-people, don't fergit! —  
'Specially in *winter*-time,  
When they's snow, and roads is fit.  
In them circumstances I'm  
Resig-nated to my lot—  
Which putts me in mind o' what  
'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees  
*Lots* o' fun! —Take spellin'-school;  
Er ole hoe-down jamborees;  
Er revivals; er ef you'll

Tackle taffy-pullin's you  
Kin git fun, and quite a few!—  
Same with huskin's. But all these  
Kind o' frolics they hain't new  
By a hunderd year' er two,  
Cipher on it as you please!  
But I'll tell you what I jest  
Think walks over all the rest—  
Anyway it suits *me* best,—  
That's "The Literary."

First they started it—" 'y gee!"  
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment  
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"  
But when all begin to jine,  
And I heerd *Izory* went,  
I jest kind o' drapped in line,  
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,  
Scrawny shoat putt fer the crick  
Down some pig-trail through the thick  
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's been  
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—  
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,  
" 'Bout it tel you go and see  
Their blame 'Literary'!"

Very first night I was there  
I was 'p'inted to be what  
They call "Critic"—so's a fair  
And square jedgment could be got  
On the pieces 'at was read,  
And on the debate,—“Which air  
Most destructive element,  
Fire er worder?” Then they hed  
Compositions on “Content,”  
“Death,” and “Botany”; and Tomps  
He read one on “Dreenin' Swamps”  
I p'nounced the boss, and said,  
“So fur, 'at's the best thing read  
In yer 'Literary'!”

Then they *sung* some—tel I called  
Order, and got back ag'in  
In the critic's cheer, and hauled  
All o' the p'formers in:—  
Mandy Brizendine read one  
I fergit; and Doc's was “Thought”;  
And Sarepty's, hern was “None  
Air Denied 'at Knocks”; and Daut—  
Fayette Strawnse's little niece—  
She got up and spoke a piece:

Then Izory she read hern—  
“Best thing in the whole concern,”  
I-says-ee; “now le’ ’s adjourn  
This-here ‘Literary’!”

They was some contendin’—yit  
We broke up in harmony.  
Road outside as white as grit,  
And as slick as slick could be!—  
I’d fetched ’Zory in my sleigh,—  
And I had a heap to say,  
Drivin’ back—in fact, I driv  
’Way around the old north way,  
Where the Daubenspeckses live.  
’Zory allus—’fore that night—  
Never ’peared to feel jest right  
In my company.—You see,  
On’y thing on earth saved me  
Was that “Literary”!

## DOWN TO THE CAPITAL

**I**' BE'N down to the Capital at Washington, D. C.,  
Where Congerss meets and passes on the pensions ort  
to be  
Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence the  
war  
Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how proud  
we are!

Old Flukens, from our deestricks, jes' turned in and tuck  
and made  
Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at I  
stayed  
The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,  
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy—and I guess most folks agrees—  
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin do jes' what they  
please;  
A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congerssman and  
all,  
And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his  
money square:

We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin' there;  
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and stayed  
and made

His millions; don't know what *I'm* worth untel my pen-  
sion's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try  
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas burnin' mighty nigh  
In ever' room about the house; and ever' night about,  
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever' kind  
'at lives,

Injuns and all! and Senators, and Ripresentatives;  
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses I  
*declare,*

And even old men shamblin' round and a-waltzin' with  
'em there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes, 'way in some other room  
Jes' chokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and per-  
fume;

And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and statutes,  
made

Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round there  
in the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with *me* to  
take a hand

And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you under-  
stand;

But when I said how tired I was, and made fer open air,  
He follered, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin' there.

“My God!” says he—Fluke says to me, “I’m tireder’n  
you;

Don’t putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a chew.

Set back a leetle further in the shadder—that’ll do;

I’m tireder’n you, old man; I’m tireder’n you.

“You see that-air old dome,” says he, “humped up ag’inst  
the sky?

It’s grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by and by,

And then it stays jes’ thataway—jes’ anchored high and  
dry

Betwixt the sky up yender and the achin’ of yer eye.

“Night’s purty; not so purty, though, as what it ust to be  
When my first wife was livin’. You remember her?”  
says he.

I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, “I wonder now ef she  
Knows where I am—and what I am—and what I ust to  
be?

“That band in there!—I ust to think ’at music couldn’t  
wear

A feller out the way it does; but that ain’t music there—  
That’s jes’ a’ *imitation*, and like ever’thing, I swear,  
I hear, er see, er tetch, er taste, er tackle anywhere!

“It’s all jes’ *artificial*, this-’ere high-priced life of ours;  
The theory, *it’s* sweet enough, tel it saps down and sours.  
They’s no *home* left, ner *ties* o’ home about it. By the  
powers,

The whole thing’s artificialer’n artificial flowers!

“And all I want, and could lay down and *sob* fer, is to  
know

The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes’ to go  
And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that ’u’d rest  
me so,—

Jes’ set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke, you  
know.

“Jes’ set there, like I ust to do,” says Fluke, a-startin’ in,  
’Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to hisse’f ag’in;  
Then stopped and turned, and kind o’ coughed, and  
stooped and fumbled fer

Somepin’ o’ ’nuther in the grass—I guess his handker-  
cher.

Well, sence I'm back from Washington, where I left  
Fluke a-still  
A-leggin' fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pension bill,  
I've half-way struck the notion, when I think o' wealth  
and sich,  
They's nothin' much patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!

## THE OLD MAN AND JIM

**O**LD man never had much to say—  
    'Ceptin' to Jim,—  
    And Jim was the wildest boy he had—  
    And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!  
Never heerd him speak but once  
    Er twice in my life,—and first time was  
    When the army broke out, and Jim he went,  
The old man backin' him, fer three months;  
And all 'at I heerd the old man say  
Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—  
    “Well, good-by, Jim:  
    Take keer of yourse'f!”

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied  
    Jes' *lookin'* at Jim  
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see? —  
    'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!  
And over and over I mind the day  
The old man come and stood round in the way  
    While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—  
And down at the deepo a-heerin' him say,

“Well, good-by, Jim:  
Take keer of yourse’f!”

Never was nothin’ about the *farm*  
Disting’ished Jim;  
Neighbors all ust to wonder why  
The old man ’peared wrapped up in him:  
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back  
’At Jim was the bravest boy we had  
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,  
And his fightin’ good as his farmin’ bad—  
’At he had led, with a bullet clean  
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag  
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen,—  
The old man wound up a letter to him  
’At Cap. read to us, ’at said : “Tell Jim  
Good-by,  
And take keer of hisse’f.”

Jim come home jes’ long enough  
To take the whim  
’At he’d like to go back in the calvery—  
And the old man jes’ wrapped up in him!  
Jim ’lowed ’at he’d had sich luck afore,  
Guessed he’d tackle her three years more.  
And the old man give him a colt he’d raised,  
And follered him over to Camp Ben Wade,

And laid around fer a week er so,  
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—  
Tel finally he rid away,  
And last he heerd was the old man say,—  
    “Well, good-by, Jim:  
    Take keer of yourse'f!”

Tuk the papers, the old man did,  
    A-watchin' fer Jim—  
Fully believin' he'd make his mark  
    *Some way—jes' wrapped up in him!—*  
And many a time the word 'u'd come  
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—  
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where  
Jim rid right into their cannons there,  
And *tuk* 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other way,  
And socked it home to the boys in gray  
    As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—  
Jim a lieutenant, and one arm gone,  
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—  
    “Well, good-by, Jim:  
    Take keer of yourse'f!”

Think of a private, now, perhaps,  
    We'll say like Jim,  
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—  
    And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!

Think of him—with the war plum' through,  
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue  
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,  
And the old man, bendin' over him—  
The surgeon turnin' away with tears  
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,  
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to  
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—  
    “Well, good-by, Jim:  
    Take keer of yourse'f!”

## HERR WEISER

**H**ERR WEISER!—Threescore-years-and-  
ten,—

A hale white rose of his countrymen,  
Transplanted here in the Hoosier loam,  
And blossomy as his German home—  
As blossomy and as pure and sweet  
As the cool green glen of his calm retreat,  
Far withdrawn from the noisy town  
Where trade goes clamoring up and down,  
Whose fret and fever, and stress and strife,  
May not trouble his tranquil life!

Breath of rest, what a balmy gust!—  
Quit of the city's heat and dust,  
Jostling down by the winding road,  
Through the orchard ways of his quaint abode.—  
Tether the horse, as we onward fare  
Under the pear-trees trailing there,  
And thumping the wooden bridge at night  
With lumps of ripeness and lush delight,

Till the stream, as it maunders on till dawn,  
Is powdered and pelted and smiled upon.

Herr Weiser, with his wholesome face,  
And the gentle blue of his eyes, and grace  
Of unassuming honesty,  
Be there to welcome you and me!  
And what though the toil of the farm be stopped  
And the tireless plans of the place be dropped,  
While the prayerful master's knees are set  
In beds of pansy and mignonette  
And lily and aster and columbine,  
Offered in love, as yours and mine?—

What, but a blessing of kindly thought,  
Sweet as the breath of forget-me-not!—  
What, but a spirit of lustrous love  
White as the aster he bends above!—  
What, but an odorous memory  
Of the dear old man, made known to me  
In days demanding a help like his,—  
As sweet as the life of the lily is—  
As sweet as the soul of a babe, bloom-wise  
Born of a lily in paradise.

## MARTHY ELLEN

**T**HEY'S nothin' in the name to strike  
A feller more'n common like!  
'Taint liable to git no praise  
Ner nothin' like it nowadays;  
An' yit that name o' her'n is jest  
As purty as the purtiest—  
And more'n that, I'm here to say  
I'll live a-thinkin' thataway  
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

It may be I was prejudust  
In favor of it from the fust—  
'Cause I kin ricollect jest how  
We met, and hear her mother now  
A-callin' of her down the road—  
And, aggervatin' little toad!—  
I see her now, jest sort o' half-  
Way disapp'inted, turn and laugh  
And mock her—"Marthy Ellen!"

Our people never had no fuss,  
And yit they never tuck to us;  
We neighbored back and foreds some;  
Until they see she liked to come  
To our house—and me and her  
Was jest together ever'whur  
And all the time—and when they'd see  
That I liked her and she liked me,  
They'd holler "Marthy Ellen!"

When we growed up, and they shet down  
On me and her a-runnin' roun'  
Together, and her father said  
He'd never leave her nary red,  
So he'p him, ef she married me,  
And so on—and her mother she  
Jest agged the gyrl, and said she 'lowed  
She'd ruther see her in her shroud,  
I *writ* to Marthy Ellen—

That is, I kind o' tuck my pen  
In hand, and stated whur and when  
The undersigned would be that night,  
With two good hosses, saddled right  
Fer lively travelin', in case  
Her folks 'ud like to jine the race.

She sent the same note back, and writ  
"The rose is red!" right under it—  
"Your'n allus, Marthy Ellen."

That's all, I reckon—Nothin' more  
To tell but what you've heerd afore—  
The same old story, sweeter though  
Fer all the trouble, don't you know.  
Old-fashioned name! and yit it's jest  
As purty as the purtiest;  
And more'n that, I'm here to say  
I'll live a-thinkin' thataway,  
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

## AN OLD MAN'S MEMORY,

**T**HE delights of our childhood is soon passed  
away,

And our gloryus youth it departs,—  
And yit, dead and burried, they's blossoms of May  
Ore theyr medderland graves in our harts.  
So, friends of my barefooted days on the farm,  
Whether truant in city er not,  
God prosper you same as He's prosperin' me,  
Whilse your past hain't despised er forgot.

Oh! they's nothin', at morn, that's as grand unto me  
As the glorys of Natchur so fare,—  
With the Spring in the breeze, and the bloom in the trees,  
And the hum of the bees ev'rywhare!  
The green in the woods, and the birds in the boughs,  
And the dew spangled over the fields;  
And the bah of the sheep and the bawl of the cows  
And the call from the house to your meals!

Then ho! fer your brekfast! and ho! fer the toil  
That waiteth alike man and beast!  
Oh! it's soon with my team I'll be turnin' up soil,  
Whilse the sun shoulders up in the East  
Ore the tops of the ellums and beeches and oaks,  
To smile his Godspeed on the plow,  
And the furry and seed, and the Man in his need,  
And the joy of the swet of his brow!

## WORTERMELON TIME

**O**LD wortermelon time is a-comin' round ag'in,  
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n  
me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wherefore, as you can plainly  
see.

Oh! it's in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,  
And it's thare they'll lay and waller in the sunshine  
and the dew  
Tel they wear all the green streaks clean off of theyr  
breast;  
And you bet I ain't a-findin' any fault with them; air  
you?

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;  
And they don't need much 'tendin', as ev'ry farmer  
knows;  
And when theyr ripe and ready fer to pluck from the  
vine,  
I want to say to you theyr the best fruit that grows.

It's some likes the yellor-core, and some likes the red,  
And it's some says "The Little Californy" is the best;  
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my head,  
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting-sprout," of the West.

You don't want no punkins nigh your wortermelon  
vines—

'Cause, some-way-another, they'll spile your melons,  
shore;—

I've seed 'em taste like punkins, from the core to the  
rines,

Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

But your melons that's raised right and 'tended to with  
care,

You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's  
pride and joy,

And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a air

As ef each one of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound

When you split one down the back and jolt the halves  
in two,

And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—

And you says unto your sweethart, "Oh, here's the  
core fer you!"

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,  
Especshally the childern, and watch theyr high delight  
As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,  
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched ap-  
petite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see 'em eat—  
A slice of wortermelon's like a frenchharp in theyr  
hands,  
And when they "saw" it through theyr mouth sich music  
can't be beat—  
'Cause it's music both the sperit and the stummick  
understands.

Oh, they's more in wortermelons than the purty-colored  
meat,  
And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter squshed  
betwixt  
The up'ard and the down'ard motions of a feller's teeth,  
And it's the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood  
mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away  
To the summertime of youth; and again I see the  
dawn,  
And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,  
And the dusk and dew a-fallin', and the night  
a-comin' on.

And thare's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves and  
trees,  
And the stars a-peekin' down on us as still as silver  
mice,  
And us boys in the wortermelons on our hands and knees,  
And the new-moon hangin' ore us like a yeller-cored  
slice.

Oh! it's wortermelon time is a-comin' round ag'in,  
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,  
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—  
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly  
see.

## WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

**W**HEN the frost is on the punkin and the  
fodder's in the shock,  
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the  
struttin' turkey-cock,  
And the clackin' of the guineys, and cluckin' of the hens,  
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,  
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful  
rest,  
As he leaves the house, bare-headed, and goes out to feed  
the stock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmusfere  
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is  
here—  
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the  
trees,  
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and the buzzin'  
of the bees;

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the  
haze

Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airly autumn days  
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock

The husky, rusty russel of the tossels of the corn,  
And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the  
morn;

The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but  
still

A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they grewed to  
fill;

The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
The hosses in theyr stalls below—the clover overhead! —  
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller  
keeps

Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yellor heaps;  
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks  
is through

With their mince and apple-butter, and theyr souse and  
sausage, too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be  
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around  
on *me*—

I'd want to 'commode 'em—all the whole-indurin'  
flock—

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the  
shock!

## AUGUST

**A** DAY of torpor in the sullen heat  
Of Summer's passion: In the sluggish stream  
The panting cattle lave their lazy feet,  
With drowsy eyes, and dream.

Long since the winds have died, and in the sky  
There lives no cloud to hint of Nature's grief;  
The sun glares ever like an evil eye,  
And withers flower and leaf.

Upon the gleaming harvest-field remote  
The thresher lies deserted, like some old  
Dismantled galleon that hangs afloat  
Upon a sea of gold.

The yearning cry of some bewildered bird.  
Above an empty nest, and truant boys  
Along the river's shady margin heard—  
A harmony of noise—

A melody of wrangling voices blent  
With liquid laughter, and with rippling calls  
Of piping lips and trilling echoes sent  
To mimic waterfalls.

And through the hazy veil the atmosphere  
Has draped about the gleaming face of Day,  
The sifted glances of the sun appear  
In splinterings of spray.

The dusty highway, like a cloud of dawn,  
Trails o'er the hillside, and the passer-by,  
A tired ghost in misty shroud, toils on  
His journey to the sky.

And down across the valley's drooping sweep,  
Withdrawn to farthest limit of the glade,  
The forest stands in silence, drinking deep  
Its purple wine of shade.

The gossamer floats up on phantom wing;  
The sailor-vision voyages the skies,  
And carries into chaos everything  
That freights the weary eyes:

Till, throbbing on and on, the pulse of heat  
Increases—reaches—passes fever's height,  
And Day sinks into slumber, cool and sweet,  
Within the arms of Night.

## BACK FROM TOWN

**O**LD friends allus is the best,  
Halest-like and heartiest:  
Knowed us first, and don't allow  
We're so blame much better now!  
They was standin' at the bars  
When we grabbed "the kivvered kyars"  
And lit out fer town, to make  
Money—and that old mistake!

We thought then the world we went  
Into beat "The Settlement,"  
And the friends 'at we'd make there  
Would beat any anywhere!—  
And they *do*—fer that's their biz:  
They beat all the friends they is—  
'Cept the raal old friends like you  
'At staid home, like *I'd* ort to!

W'y, of all the good things yit  
I ain't shet of, is to quit

Business, and git back to sheer  
These old comforts waitin' here—  
These old friends; and these old hands  
'At a feller understands;  
These old winter nights, and old  
Young-folks chased in out the cold!

Sing "Hard Times'll come ag'in  
No More!" and neighbors all jine in!  
Here's a feller come from town  
Wants that-air old fiddle down  
From the chimbly!—Git the floor  
Cleared fer one cowtillion more!—  
It's poke the kitchen fire, says he,  
And shake a friendly leg with me!

## A DREAM OF AUTUMN

**M**ELLOW hazes, lowly trailing  
Over wood and meadow, veiling  
Somber skies, with wild-fowl sailing  
Sailor-like to foreign lands;  
And the north-wind overleaping  
Summer's brink, and flood-like sweeping  
Wrecks of roses where the weeping-  
Willows wring their helpless hands.

Flared, like Titan torches flinging  
Flakes of flame and embers, springing  
From the vale, the trees stand swinging  
In the moaning atmosphere;  
While in dead'ning lands the lowing  
Of the cattle, sadder growing,  
Fills the sense to overflowing  
With the sorrow of the year.

Sorrowfully, yet the sweeter  
Sings the brook in rippled meter  
Under boughs that lithely teeter

Lorn birds, answering from the shores  
Through the viny, shady-shiny  
Interspaces, shot with tiny  
Flying motes that fleck the winy  
Wave-engraven sycamores.

Fields of ragged stubble, wrangled  
With rank weeds, and shocks of tangled  
Corn, with crests like rent plumes dangled  
Over Harvest's battle-plain;  
And the sudden whir and whistle  
Of the quail that, like a missile,  
Whizzes over thorn and thistle,  
And, a missile, drops again.

Muffled voices, hid in thickets  
Where the redbird stops to stick its  
Ruddy beak betwixt the pickets  
Of the truant's rustic trap;  
And the sound of laughter ringing  
Where, within the wild vine swinging,  
Climb Bacchante's schoolmates, flinging  
Purple clusters in her lap.

Rich as wine, the sunset flashes  
Round the tilted world, and dashes  
Up the sloping west, and splashes  
    Red foam over sky and sea—  
Till my dream of Autumn, paling  
In the splendor all-prevailing,  
Like a sallow leaf goes sailing  
    Down the silence solemnly.

## THE BOYS

W HERE are they?—the friends of my childhood enchanted—

The clear, laughing eyes looking back in  
my own,  
And the warm, chubby fingers my palms have so wanted,  
As when we raced over

Pink pastures of clover,  
And mocked the quail's whir and the bumblebee's  
drone?

Have the breezes of time blown their blossomy faces  
Forever adrift down the years that are flown?  
Am I never to see them romp back to their places,  
Where over the meadow,

In sunshine and shadow,  
The meadow-larks trill, and the bumblebees drone?

Where are they? Ah! dim in the dust lies the clover;  
The whippoorwill's call has a sorrowful tone,  
And the dove's—I have wept at it over and over;—  
I want the glad lustre

Of youth, and the cluster  
Of faces asleep where the bumblebees drone!

## THE FIRST BLUEBIRD

**J**EST rain and snow! and rain again!  
And dribble! drip! and blow!  
Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then—  
Some more rain and snow!

This morning I was 'most afeard  
To *wake* up—when, I jing!  
I seen the sun shine out and heerd  
The first bluebird of Spring!—  
Mother she'd raised the winder some;—  
And in acrost the orchurd come,  
Soft as a' angel's wing,  
A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,  
Too sweet fer anything!

The winter's shroud was rent apart—  
The sun bu'st forth in glee,—  
And when *that bluebird* sung, my hart  
Hopped out o' bed with me!

## TOWN AND COUNTRY

**T**HEY'S a prejudice allus 'twixt country and town

Which I wisht in my hart wasnt so.  
You take *city* people, jest square up and down,  
And they're mighty good people to know:  
And whare's better people a-livin', to-day,  
Than us in the *country*? —Yit good  
As both of us is, we're divorsed, you might say,  
And won't compermise when we could!

Now as nigh into town fer yer Pap, ef you please,  
Is what's called the sooburbs.—Fer thare  
You'll at least ketch a whiff of the breeze and a sniff  
Of the breth of wild-flowrs ev'rywhare.  
They's room fer the childern to play, and grow, too—  
And to roll in the grass, er to climb  
Up a tree and rob nests, like they *ortent* to do,  
But they'll do *anyhow* ev'ry time!

My Son-in-law said, when he lived in the town,  
He jest natchurly pined, night and day,  
Fer a sight of the woods, er a acre of ground  
Whare the trees wasent all cleared away!  
And he says to me onc't, whilse a-visitin' us  
On the farm, "It's not strange, I declare,  
That we can't coax you folks, without raisin' a fuss,  
To come to town, visitin' thare!"

And says I, "Then git back whare you sorto' *belong*—  
And *Madaline*, too,—and yer three  
Little childern," says I, "that don't know a bird-song,  
Ner a hawk from a chicky-dee-dee!  
Git back," I-says-I, "to the blue of the sky  
And the green of the fields, and the shine  
Of the sun, with a laugh in yer voice and yer eye  
As harty as Mother's and mine!"

Well—long-and-short of it,—he's compermised *some*—  
He's moved in the sooburbs.—And now  
They don't haf to coax, when they want us to come,  
'Cause we turn in and go *anyhow*!  
Fer thare—well, they's room fer the songs and purfume  
Of the grove and the old orchurd-ground,  
And they's room fer the childern out thare, and they's  
room  
Fer theyr Gran'pap to waller 'em round!

## DECORATION DAY ON THE PLACE

**I**T'S lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a *Sund'y-day*,  
to me,  
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—  
Yit, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the  
air,  
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

They say, though, Decoration Day is giner'ly observed  
'Most *ev'rywhares*—espeshally by soldier-boys that's  
served.—

But me and Mother's never went—we seldom git  
away,—

In p'int o' fact, we're *allus* home on *Decoration Day*.

They say the old boys marches through the streets in  
colum's grand,

A-follerin' the old war-tunes they're playin' on the  
band—

And citizuns all jinin' in—and little childern, too—

All marchin', under shelter of the old Red White and  
Blue.—

With roses! roses! roses!—ev'rybody in the town!—  
And crowds o' little girls in white, jest fairly loaded  
down!—

Oh! don't THE Boys know it, from theyr camp acrost  
the hill? —

Don't they see theyr com'ards comin' and the old flag  
wavin' still?

Oh! can't they hear the bugul and the rattle of the  
drum?—

Ain't they no way under heavens they can rickollect us  
some?

Ain't they no way we can coax 'em, through the roses,  
jest to say

They know that ev'ry day on earth's theyr Decoration  
Day?

We've tried that—me and Mother,—whare Elias takes  
his rest,

In the orchurd—in his uniform, and hands acrost his  
brest,

And the flag he died fer, smilin' and a-rippin' in the  
breeze

Above his grave—and over that,—*the robin in the trees!*

And *yit* it's lonesome—lonesome!—It's a *Sund'y-day*,  
to *me*,  
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—  
Still, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the  
air,  
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

## THE OLD BAND

**I**T'S mighty good to git back to the old town, shore,  
Considerin' I've be'n away twenty year and more.  
Sence I moved then to Kansas, of course I see a  
change,  
A-comin' back, and notice things that's new to me and  
strange;  
Especially at evening when yer new band-fellers meet,  
In fancy uniforms and all, and play out on the street—  
. . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey and the Saxhorn  
fellers—say?  
I want to hear the *old* band play.

What's come of Eastman, and Nat Snow? And where's  
War Barnett at?  
And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart; Tom Richa'son  
and that  
Air brother of him played the drum as twic't as big as  
Jim;  
And old Hi Kerns, the carpenter—say, what's become o'  
him?

I make no doubt yer *new band* now's a *competenter* band,  
And plays their music more by note than what they play  
by hand,  
And stylisher and grander tunes; but somehow—*any-*  
way,  
I want to hear the *old* band play.

Sich tunes as "John Brown's Body" and "Sweet Alice,"  
don't you know;  
And "The Camels Is A-Comin'," and "John Anderson,  
My Jo";  
And a dozent others of 'em—"Number Nine" and  
"Number 'Leven"  
Was favo-rites that fairly made a feller dream o'  
Heaven.  
And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've laid so still in bed  
I've even heerd the locus'-blossoms droppin' on the shed  
When "Lily Dale," er "Hazel Dell," had sobbed and  
died away—  
. . . I want to hear the *old* band play.

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the *old band's* what I  
said—  
It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with somepin' in my  
head;

And, whilst I'm no musicianer, when my blame' eyes is  
jes'

Nigh drowned out, and Mem'ry squares her jaws and  
sort o' says

She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want to jes' turn in  
And take and light right out o' here and git back West  
ag'in

And *stay* there, when I git there, where I never haf' to  
say

I want to hear the *old* band play.

## “LAST CHRISTMAS WAS A YEAR AGO”

### THE OLD LADY SPEAKS

**L**AST Christmas was a year ago,  
Says I to David, I-says-I,  
“We’re goin’ to morning service, so  
You hitch up right away: I’ll try  
To tell the girls jes’ what to do  
Fer dinner.—We’ll be back by two.”  
I didn’t wait to hear what he  
Would more’n like say back to me,  
But banged the stable door and flew  
Back to the house, jes’ plumb chilled through.

Cold! *Woooh!* how cold it was! My-oh!  
Frost flyin’, and the air, you know,  
“Jes’ sharp enough,” heerd David swear,  
“To shave a man and cut his hair!”  
And blow and blow! and snow and snow!—  
Where it had drifted ’long the fence  
And ’crost the road,—some places, though,  
Jes’ swep’ clean to the gravel, so

The goin' was as bad fer sleighs  
As 'twas fer wagons,—and both ways,  
'Twixt snow-drifts and the bare ground, I've  
Jes' wondered we got through alive;  
    I hain't saw nothin', 'fore er sence,  
'At beat it anywheres, I know—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.

And David said, as we set out,  
'At Christmas services was 'bout  
    As cold and wuthless kind o' love  
        To offer up as he knowed of;  
And as fer him, he railly thought  
    'At the Good Bein' up above  
Would think more of us—as He ought—  
A-stayin' home on sich a day,  
And thankin' of Him thataway!  
And jawed on, in an undertone,  
'Bout leavin' Lide and Jane alone  
There on the place, and me not there  
To oversee 'em, and p'pare  
The stuffin' fer the turkey, and  
The sass and all, you understand.

I've allus managed David by  
Jes' sayin' *nothin'*. That was why  
He'd chased Lide's beau away—'cause Lide  
*She'd* allus take up Perry's side  
When David tackled him; and so,  
Last Christmas was a year ago,—  
Er ruther, 'bout *a week afore*,—

David and Perry'd quarr'l'd about  
Some tom-fool argyment, you know,  
And Pap told him to "Jes' git out  
O' there, and not to come no more,  
And, when he went, to shet the door!"  
And as he passed the winder, we  
Saw Perry, white as white could be,  
March past, onhitch his hoss, and light  
A see-gyar, and lope out o' sight.  
Then Lide she come to me and cried!

And I said nothin'—was no need.  
And yit, you know, that man jes' got  
Right out o' there's ef he'd be'n shot,  
P'tendin' he must go and feed  
The stock er somepin'. Then I tried  
To git the pore girl pacified.

But, gittin' back to—where was we? —  
Oh, yes!—where David lectered me  
All way to meetin', high and low,  
Last Christmas was a year ago:  
Fer all the awful cold, they was  
A fair attendunce; mostly, though,  
The crowd was 'round the stoves, you see,  
Thawin' their heels and scrougin' us.

Ef 't 'adn't be'n fer the old Squire  
Givin' *his* seat to us, as in  
We stomped, a-fairly perishin',  
And David could 'a' got no fire,  
He'd jes' 'a' drapped there in his tracks:

And Squire, as I was tryin' to yit  
Make room fer him, says, "No; the fac's

Is, *I* got to git up and git  
'*Ithout* no preachin'. Jes' got word—  
Trial fer life—can't be deferred!"  
And out he putt!

. . . . . And all way through  
The sermont—and a long one, too—  
I couldn't he'p but think o' Squire  
And us changed round so, and admire  
His gintle ways,—to give his warm  
Bench up, and have to face the storm.  
And when I noticed David he

Was needin' jabbin'—I thought best  
To kind o' sort o' let him rest:  
'Peared-like he slep' so peacefully!  
And then I thought o' home, and how  
And what the gyrls was doin' now,  
And kind o' prayed, 'way in my breast,  
And breshed away a tear er two  
As David waked, and church was through.

By time we'd "howdyed" round and shuck  
Hands with neighbors, must 'a' tuck  
A half hour longer: ever' one  
A-sayin' "Christmas gift!" afore  
David er me—so we got none!

But David warmed up, more and more,  
And got so jokey-like, and had  
His sperits up, and 'peared so glad,

I whispered to him, "S'pose you ast  
A passel of 'em come and eat  
Their dinners with us. Gyrls's got  
A full-and-plenty fer the lot  
And all their kin!" So David passed

The invite round: and ever' seat  
In ever' wagon-bed and sleigh  
Was jes' packed, as we rode away,—  
The young folks, mil'd er so along,  
A-strikin' up a sleighin'-song,

Tel David laughed and yelled, you know,  
And jes' whirped up and sent the snow  
And gravel flyin' thick and fast—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.  
W'y, that-air seven-mil'd ja'nt we come—  
Jes' seven mil'd scant from church to home—  
It didn't 'pear, *that* day, to be  
Much further railyly 'n 'bout *three*!

But I was purty squeamish by  
The time home hove in sight and I  
See two vehickles standin' there  
Already. So says I, "*Prepare!*"  
All to myse'f. And presently  
David he sobered; and says he,  
"Hain't that-air Squire Hanch's old  
Buggy," he says, "and claybank mare?"  
Says I, "Le' 's git in out the cold—  
Your company's nigh 'bout froze!" He says,  
"Whose sleigh's that-air, a-standin' there?"  
Says I, "It's no odds *whose—you* jes'  
Drive to the house and let us out,  
'Cause we're jes' *freezin'*, nigh about!"  
Well, David swung up to the door,  
And out we piled. And first I heerd  
*Jane's* voice, then *Lide's*,—I thought afore  
I reached that gyrl I'd jes' die, shore;

And *when* I reached her, wouldn't keered  
 Much ef I had, I was so glad,  
 A-kissin' her through my green veil,  
 And jes' excitin' her so bad,  
     'At *she* broke down *herse'*f—and Jane,  
     *She* cried—and we all hugged again.  
 And *David*?—David jes' turned pale!—  
 Looked at the gyrls, and then at me,  
 Then at the open door—and then—  
     "Is old Squire Hanch in there?" says he.  
 The old Squire suddently stood in  
 The doorway, with a sneakin' grin.  
 "Is Perry Anders in there, too?"  
 Says David, limberin' all through,  
 As Lide and me both grabbed him, and  
 Perry stepped out and waved his hand  
 And says, "Yes, Pap." And David jes'  
 Stooped and kissed Lide, and says, "I guess  
 Yer *mother's* much to blame as you.  
 Ef *she* kin resk him, I kin too!"  
     The dinner we had then hain't no  
 Bit better'n the one to-day  
 'At we'll have fer 'em. Hear some sleigh  
 A-jinglin' now. David, fer *me*,  
 I wish you'd jes' go out and see  
 Ef they're in sight yit. It jes' does

Me good to think, in times like these,  
Lide's done so well. And David, he's  
More tractabler'n what he was—  
Last Christmas was a year ago.

## FESSLER'S BEES

“**T**ALKIN’ ’bout yer bees,” says Ike,  
    Speakin’ slow and ser’ous-like,  
    “D’ ever tell you ’bout old ‘Bee’—  
Old ‘Bee’ Fessler?” Ike says-he!  
    “Might call him a *bee-expert*,  
    When it come to handlin’ bees,—  
Roll the sleeves up of his shirt  
    And wade in amongst the trees  
    Where a swarm ’u’d settle, and—  
Blam’est man on top of dirt!  
    Rake ’em with his naked hand  
Right back in the hive ag’in,  
    Jes’ as easy as you please!  
    Nary bee ’at split the breeze  
Ever jabbed a stinger in  
Old ‘Bee’ Fessler—jes’ in fun,  
Er in *airnest*—nary one!—  
Couldn’t agg one *on* to, nuther,  
Ary one way er the other!

“Old ‘Bee’ Fessler,” Ike says-he,  
“Made a speshyality  
Jes’ o’ bees; and built a shed—  
    Len’t’ about a half a mild!  
Had about a *thousan’* head  
    O’ hives, I reckon—tame and wild!  
Durndest buzzin’ ever wuz—  
Wuss’n telegraph-poles does  
When they’re sockin’ home the news  
Tight as they kin let ’er loose!  
Visitors rag out and come  
Clean from town to hear ’em hum,  
And stop at the kivered bridge;  
But wuz some ’u’d cross the ridge  
Allus, and go clos’ter—so’s  
They could *see* ’em hum, I s’pose!  
’Peared-like strangers down that track  
Allus met folks comin’ back  
Lookin’ extry fat and hearty  
Fer a city picnic party!

“’Fore he went to Floridy,  
Old ‘Bee’ Fessler,” Ike says-he—  
“Old ‘Bee’ Fessler couldn’t bide  
    Childern on his place,” says Ike.  
“Yit, fer all, they’d climb inside  
    And tromp round there, keerless-like,

In their bare feet. 'Bee' could tell  
Ev'ry town-boy by his yell—  
So's 'at when they bounced the fence,  
Didn't make no difference!  
*He'd* jes' git down on one knee  
In the grass and pat the bee!—  
And, ef 't 'adn't stayed stuck in,  
Fess' 'u'd set the sting ag'in,  
'N' potter off, and wait around  
Fer the old famillyer sound.  
Allus boys there, more or less,  
Scootin' round the premises!  
When the buckwheat wuz in bloom,  
Lawzy! how them bees 'u'd boom  
Round the boys 'at crossed that way  
Fer the crick on Saturday!  
Never seemed to me su'prisin'  
'At the sting o' bees 'uz p'izin!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,"  
Ike says, "nothin' 'bout a bee  
'At old Fessler didn't know,—  
W'y, it jes' 'peared-like 'at he  
Knowed their language, high and low:  
Claimed he told jes' by their buzz  
What their wants and wishes wuz!

Peek in them-air little holes

Round the porches o' the hive—  
Drat their pesky little souls!—

Could 'a' skinned the man alive!  
Bore right in there with his thumb,  
And squat down and scrape the gum  
Outen ev'ry hole, and blow  
'N' bresh the crumbs off, don't you know!  
Take the roof off, and slide back  
Them-air glass concerns they pack  
Full o' honey, and jes' lean  
'N' grabble 'mongst 'em fer the queen!  
Fetch her out and *show* you to her—  
Jes', you might say, *interview* her!

"Year er two," says Ike, says-he,  
"'Fore he went to Floridy,  
Fessler struck the theory,

*Honey* was the same as *love*—

You could make it day and night:  
Said them bees o' his could be

Got jes' twic't the work out of

Ef a feller managed right.

He contended ef bees found  
*Blossoms* all the year around,  
He could git 'em down at once  
To work all the *winter* months

Same as *summer*. So, one fall,  
When their summer's work wuz done,  
'Bee' turns in and robs 'em all;  
Loads the hives then, one by one,  
On the cyars, and 'lowed he'd see  
Ef bees loafed in *Floridy*!  
Said he bet he'd know the reason  
Ef *his* didn't work that season!

"And," says Ike, "it's jes'," says-he,  
'Like old Fessler says to me:  
'Any man kin fool a *bee*,  
Git him down in *Floridy*!'  
'Peared at fust, as old 'Bee' said,  
Fer to kind o' turn their head  
Fer a spell; but, bless you! they  
Didn't lose a half a day  
Altogether!—Jes' lit in  
Them-air tropics, and them-air  
Cacktusses a-ripen-nin',  
'N' magnolyers, and sweet-peas,  
'N' 'simmon and pineapple trees,  
'N' ripe bananers, here and there,  
'N' dates a-danglin' in the breeze,  
'N' figs and reezins ev'rywhere,  
All waitin' jes' fer Fessler's bees!  
'N' Fessler's bees, with gaumy wings,  
A-gittin' down and *whoopin'* things!—

Fessler kind o' overseein'  
'Em, and sort o' '*hee-o-heein*'!

"'Fore he went to *Floridy*,  
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,  
"Wuzn't counted, jes' to say,  
Mean er or'n'ry anyway;  
On'y ev'ry 'tarnel dime  
    'At 'u'd pass him on the road  
He'd ketch up with, ev'ry time;  
    And no mortal ever knowed  
Him to spend a copper cent—  
'Less on some fool-'*speriment*  
With them *bees*—like that-un he  
Played on 'em in *Floridy*.  
Fess', of course, *he* tuck his ease,  
But 'twuz *bilious* on the bees!  
Sweat, you know, 'u'd jes' stand out  
    On their *forreds*—pant and groan,  
And grunt round and limp about!—  
    And old 'Bee,' o' course, a-knowin'  
'Twuzn't no fair shake to play  
    On them pore dumb insecs, ner  
To abuse 'em thataway.  
*Bees* has rights, I'm here to say,  
    And that's all they ast him fer!

Man as mean as *that*, jes' 'pears,  
Could 'a' worked bees on the sheers!  
Cleared big money—well, I guess,  
'Bee' shipped honey, more er less,  
Into ev'ry state, perhaps,  
Ever putt down in the maps!

“But by time he fetched 'em back  
In the spring ag'in,” says Ike,  
“They wuz actin' s'picious-like:  
Though they 'peared to lost the track  
O' ev'rything they saw er heard,  
They'd lay round the porch, and gap'  
At their shadders in the sun,  
Do-less like, ontel some bird  
Suddently 'u'd maybe drap  
In a bloomin' churry tree,  
Twitterin' a tune 'at run  
In their minds familiously!  
They'd revive up, kind o', then,  
Like they argied: 'Well, it's be'n  
The most longest summer we  
Ever saw er want to see!  
Must be *right*, though, er *old* “Bee”  
'U'd notify us!’ they says-ee;

And they'd sort o' square their chin  
And git down to work ag'in—  
Moanin' round their honey-makin',  
Kind o' like their head was achin'.  
*Tetchin'* fer to see how they  
Trusted Fessler thataway—  
Him a-lazin' round, and smirkin'  
To hisse'f to see 'em workin'!

“But old ‘Bee,’ ” says Ike, says-he,—  
“*Now* where is he? *Where's* he gone?  
Where's the head he helt so free?  
Where's his pride and vanity?  
What's his hopes a-restin' on? —  
Never knowed a man,” says Ike,  
“Take advantage of a bee,  
'At affliction didn't strike  
Round in that vicinity!  
Sinners allus suffers some,  
And *old Fessler's* reck'nin' come!  
That-air man to-day is jes'  
Like the grass 'at Scriptur' says  
Cometh up, and then turns in  
And jes' gits cut down ag'in!

Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,  
"Says, last fall, says he to me—  
'Ike,' says he, 'them bees has jes'  
Ciphered out my or'n'riness!  
Nary bee in ary swarm  
On the whole endurin' farm  
Won't have nothin' more to do  
    With a man as mean as I've  
Be'n to them, last year er two!  
    Nary bee in ary hive  
But'll turn his face away,  
Like they ort, whenever they  
Hear my footprints drawin' nigh!'  
And old 'Bee,' he'd sort o' shy  
    Round oneasy in his cheer,  
Wipe his eyes, and yit the sap,  
Spite o' all, 'u'd haf' to drap,  
    As he wound up: 'Wouldn't keer  
Quite so much ef they'd jes' light  
In and settle things up right,  
Like they ort; but—blame the thing!—  
'Pears-like they won't even *sting*!  
*Pepper* me, the way I felt,  
And I'd thank 'em, ev'ry welt!'

And as miz'able and mean  
As 'Bee' looked, ef you'd 'a' seen  
Them-air hungry eyes," says Ike,  
"You'd fergive him, more'n like.

"Wisht you had 'a' knowed old 'Bee'  
'Fore he went to Floridy!"

## THE OLD TRUNDLE-BED

**O** THE old trundle-bed where I slept when a boy!  
What canopied king might not covet the joy?  
The glory and peace of that slumber of mine,  
Like a long, gracious rest in the bosom divine:  
The quaint, homely couch, hidden close from the light,  
But daintily drawn from its hiding at night.  
O a nest of delight, from the foot to the head,  
Was the queer little, dear little, old trundle-bed!

O the old trundle-bed, where I wondering saw  
The stars through the window, and listened with awe  
To the sigh of the winds as they tremblingly crept  
Through the trees where the robin so restlessly slept:  
Where I heard the low, murmurous chirp of the wren,  
And the katydid listlessly chirrup again,  
Till my fancies grew faint and were drowsily led  
Through the maze of the dreams of the old trundle-bed.

O the old trundle-bed! O the old trundle-bed!  
With its plump little pillow, and old-fashioned spread;

Its snowy-white sheets, and the blankets above,  
Smoothed down and tucked round with the touches of  
love;

The voice of my mother to lull me to sleep  
With the old fairy stories my memories keep  
Still fresh as the lilies that bloom o'er the head  
Once bowed o'er my own in the old trundle-bed.

## WHERE THE CHILDREN USED TO PLAY

**T**HE old farm-home is Mother's yet and mine,  
And filled it is with plenty and to spare,—  
But we are lonely here in life's decline,  
Though fortune smiles around us everywhere:  
We look across the gold  
Of the harvests, as of old—  
The corn, the fragrant clover, and the hay;  
But most we turn our gaze,  
As with eyes of other days,  
To the orchard where the children used to play.

*O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
To the orchard where the children used to play.*

Our sloping pasture-lands are filled with herds;  
The barn and granary-bins are bulging o'er;  
The grove's a paradise of singing birds—  
The woodland brook leaps laughing by the door;  
Yet lonely, lonely still,  
Let us prosper as we will,  
Our old hearts seem so empty everyway—  
We can only through a mist  
See the faces we have kissed  
In the orchard where the children used to play.

*O from our life's full measure  
And rich hoard of worldly treasure  
We often turn our weary eyes away,  
And hand in hand we wander  
Down the old path winding yonder  
To the orchard where the children used to play.*

## THE HOSS

**T**HE hoss he is a splendud beast;  
He is man's friend, as heaven desined,  
And, search the world from west to east,  
No honester you'll ever find!

Some calls the hoss "a pore dumb brute,"  
And yit, like Him who died fer you,  
I say, as I theyr charge refute,  
" 'Fergive; they know not what they do! ' "

No wiser animal makes tracks  
Upon these earthly shores, and hence  
Arose the axium, true as facts,  
Extoled by all, as "Good hoss-sense!"

The hoss is strong, and knows his stren'th,—  
You hitch him up a time er two  
And lash him, and he'll go his len'th  
And kick the dashboard out fer you!

But, treat him allus good and kind,  
And never strike him with a stick,  
Ner aggervate him, and you'll find  
He'll never do a hostile trick.

A hoss whose master tends him right  
And worters him with daily care,  
Will do your biddin' with delight,  
And act as docile as *you* air.

He'll paw and prance to hear your praise,  
Because he's learnt to love you well;  
And, though you can't tell what he says,  
He'll nicker all he wants to tell.

He knows you when you slam the gate  
At early dawn, upon your way  
Unto the barn, and snorts elate,  
To git his corn, er oats, er hay.

He knows you, as the orphan knows  
The folks that loves her like theyr own,  
And raises her and "finds" her clothes,  
And "schools" her tel a womern-grown!

I claim no hoss will harm a man,  
Ner kick, ner run away, cavort,  
Stump-suck, er balk, er "catamaran,"  
Ef you'll jest treat him as you ort.

But when I see the beast abused,  
And clubbed around as I've saw some,  
I want to see his owner noosed,  
And jest yanked up like Absolum!

Of course they's differunce in stock,—  
A hoss that has a little yeer,  
And slender build, and shaller hock,  
Can beat his shadder, mighty near!

Whilse one that's thick in neck and chist  
And big in leg and full in flank,  
That tries to race, I still insist  
He'll have to take the second rank.

And I have jest laid back and laughed,  
And rolled and wallered in the grass  
At fairs, to see some heavy-draft  
Lead out at *first*, yit come in *last*!

Each hoss has his appinted place,—  
The heavy hoss should plow the soil;—  
The blooded racer, he must race,  
And win big wages fer his toil.

I never bet—ner never wrought  
Upon my feller man to bet—  
And yit, at times, I've often thought  
Of my convictions with regret.

I bless the hoss from hoof to head—  
From head to hoof, and tale to mane!—  
I bless the hoss, as I have said,  
From head to hoof, and back again!

I love my God the first of all,  
Then Him that perished on the cross,  
And next, my wife,—and then I fall  
Down on my knees and love the hoss.

## OLD-FASHIONED ROSES

THEY ain't no style about 'em,  
And they're sort o' pale and faded,  
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,  
Would be lonesomer, and shaded  
With a good 'eal blacker shadder  
Than the morning-glories makes,  
And the sunshine would look sadder  
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kind o'  
Sort o' *make* a feller like 'em!  
And I tell you, when I find a  
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,  
It allus sets me thinkin'  
O' the ones 'at used to grow  
And peek in thro' the chinkin'  
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,  
And how she ust to love 'em—  
When they wuzn't any other,  
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!  
And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,  
Whispered with a smile and said  
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em  
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',  
They ain't no style about 'em  
Very gaudy er displayin',  
But I wouldn't be without 'em—  
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,  
And the hollyhawks and sich,  
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses  
In the roses of the rich.

## GRIGGSBY'S STATION

PAP'S got his pattent-right, and rich as all creation;  
But where's the peace and comfort that we all  
had before?

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a-livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity  
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on the  
stairs,  
And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city! city!  
city!—  
And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!

Climb clean above the roof and look from the steeple,  
And never see a robin, nor a beech or ellow tree!  
And right here in ear-shot of at least a thousan' people,  
And none that neighbors with us or we want to go and  
see!

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—

Back where the latch-string's a-hangin' from the  
door,

And ever' neighbor round the place is dear as a relation—

Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see the Wiggenses, the whole kit-and-bilin',

A-drivin' up from Shallor Ford to stay the Sunday  
through;

And I want to see 'em hitchin' at their son-in-law's  
and pilin'

Out there at 'Lizy Ellen's like they ust to do!

I want to see the piece-quilts the <sup>new</sup> ~~old~~ girls is makin';  
And I want to pester Laury 'bout their freckled hired  
hand,

And joke her 'bout the widower she come purt' nigh  
a-takin',

Till her Pap got his pension 'lowed in time to save his  
land.

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—

Back where they's nothin' aggervatin' any more,

Shet away safe in the woods around the old location—

Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

I want to see Marindy and he'p her with her sewin',  
And hear her talk so lovin' of her man that's dead and  
gone,  
And stand up with Emanuel to show me how he's  
growin',  
And smile as I have saw her 'fore she putt her mourn-  
in' on.

And I want to see the Samples, on the old lower eighty,  
Where John, our oldest boy, he was tuk and burried—  
for  
His own sake and Katy's,—and I want to cry with Katy  
As she reads all his letters over, writ from The War.

What's in all this grand life and high situation,  
And nary pink nor hollyhawk a-bloomin' at the  
door?—  
Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—  
Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

## KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE

### I

**T**ELL you what I like the best—  
    'Long about knee-deep in June,  
    'Bout the time strawberries melts  
On the vine,—some afternoon  
    Like to jes' git out and rest,  
    And not work at nothin' else!

### II

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—  
Needn't fence it in fer me!—  
    Jes' the whole sky overhead,  
And the whole airth underneath—  
Sort o' so's a man kin breathe  
    Like he ort, and kind o' has  
Elbow-room to keerlessly  
    Sprawl out len'thways on the grass  
    Where the shadders thick and soft  
    As the kivvers on the bed  
    Mother fixes in the loft  
Allus, when they's company!

### III

Jes' a-sort o' lazin' there—  
 S'lazy, 'at you peek and peer  
 Through the wavin' leaves above,  
 Like a feller 'at's in love  
 And don't know it, ner don't keer!  
 Ever'thing you hear and see  
 Got some sort o' interest—  
 Maybe find a bluebird's nest  
 Tucked up there conveniently  
 Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be  
 Up some other apple-tree!  
 Watch the swallers skootin' past  
 'Bout as peert as you could ast;  
 Er the Bob-white raise and whiz  
 Where some other's whistle is.

### IV

Ketch a shadder down below,  
 And look up to find the crow—  
 Er a hawk,—away up there,  
 'Pearantly *froze* in the air!—  
 Hear the old hen squawk, and squat  
 Over ever' chick she's got,  
 Suddent-like!—and she knows where

That-air hawk is, well as you!—  
You jes' bet yer life she do!—  
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,  
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

V

Pee-wees' singin', to express  
My opinion, 's second class,  
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;  
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,  
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;  
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,  
In them base-ball clothes o' his,  
Sportin' round the orchard jes'  
Like he owned the premises!  
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,  
But flat on yer back, I guess,  
In the shade's where glory is!  
That's jes' what I'd like to do  
Stiddy fer a year er two!

VI

Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in  
Work 'at kind o' goes ag'in'

My convictions!—'long about  
Here in June especially!—  
Under some old apple-tree,  
Jes' a-restin' through and through  
I could git along without  
Nothin' else at all to do  
Only jes' a-wishin' you  
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,  
And June was eternity!

VII

Lay out there and try to see  
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—  
Tumble round and souse yer head  
In the clover-bloom, er pull  
Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes  
And peek through it at the skies,  
Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,  
Maybe, smilin' back at you  
In betwixt the beautiful  
Clouds o' gold and white and blue!—  
Month a man kin railly love—  
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

March ain't never nothin' new!—  
 Aprile's altogether too  
     Brash fer me! and May—I jes'  
     'Bominate its promises,—  
 Little hints o' sunshine and  
 Green around the timber-land—  
     A few blossoms, and a few  
     Chip-birds, and a sprout er two,—  
     Drap asleep, and it turns in  
     'Fore daylight and *snows* ag'in!—  
 But when *June* comes—Clear my th' oat  
     With wild honey!—Rench my hair  
 In the dew! and hold my coat!  
     Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—  
 June wants me, and I'm to spare!  
 Spread them shadders anywhere,  
 I'll git down and waller there,  
     And obleeged to you at that!

## RABBIT

**I** S'POSE it takes a feller 'at's be'n  
Raised in a country-town, like me,  
To '*preciate* rabbits! . . . Eight er ten  
Bellerin' boys and two er three  
Yelpin' dawgs all on the trail  
O' one little pop-eyed cottontail!

'Bout the first good fall o' snow—  
So's you kin track 'em, don't you know,  
Where they've run,—and one by one  
Hop 'em up and chase 'em down  
And prod 'em out of a' old bresh-pile  
Er a holler log they're a-hidin' roun',  
Er way en-nunder the ricked cord-wood  
Er crosstie-stack by the railroad track  
'Bout a mile  
Out o' sight o' the whole ding town! . . .  
Well! them's times 'at I call good!

Rabbits!—w'y, as my thoughts goes back  
To them old boyhood days o' mine,  
I kin sic him now and see "Old Jack"  
A-plowin' snow in a rabbit-track  
And a-pitchin' over him, head and heels,  
Like a blame' hat-rack,  
As the rabbit turns fer the timber-line  
Down the County Ditch through the old  
corn-fields. . . .

Yes, and I'll say right here to you,  
Rabbits that boys has *earnt*, like that—  
Skinned and hung fer a night er two  
On the old back-porch where the pump's done  
froze—  
Then fried 'bout right, where your brekfust's at,  
With hot brown gravy and shortenin' bread,—  
Rabbits, like *them*—er I ort to 'a' said,  
I s'pose,  
Rabbits like *those*  
Ain't so p'ticalar pore, I guess,  
Fer *eatin'* purposes!

## SYMPTOMS

I 'M not a-workin' now!—  
I'm jes' a-layin' round  
A-lettin' *other* people plow.—  
I'm cumberin' the ground! . . .  
I jes' don't *keer*!—I've done my sheer  
O' sweatin'!—Anyhow,  
In this dad-blasted weather here,  
I'm not a-workin' *now*!

The corn and wheat and all  
Is doin' well enough!—  
They' got clean on from now tel Fall  
To show what kind o' stuff  
'At's in their *own* dad-burn backbone;  
So, while the Scriptur's 'low  
Man ort to reap as he have sown—  
I'm not a-workin' now!

The grass en-nunder these-  
Here ellums 'long "Old Blue,"  
And shadders o' the sugar-trees,  
Beats farmin' quite a few!  
As feller says,—I ruther guess  
I'll make my comp'ny bow  
And *snooze* a few hours—more er less.—  
I'm not a-workin' now!

## HIS PA'S ROMANCE

**A**LL 'at I ever want to be  
Is ist to be a man like Pa  
When he wuz young an' married Ma!  
Uncle he telled us yisterdy  
Ist all about it then—'cause they,  
My Pa an' Ma, wuz bofe away  
To 'tend P'tracted Meetin', where  
My Pa an' Ma is allus there  
When all the big "Revivals" is,  
An' "Love-Feasts," too, an' "Class," an' "Prayer,"  
An' when's "Comoonian Servicis."  
An', yes, an' Uncle said to not  
To never tell *them* nor let on  
Like we knowed now ist how they got  
First married. So—while they wuz gone—  
Uncle he telled us ever'thing—  
'Bout how my Paw wuz ist a pore  
Farm-boy.—He says, I tell you *what*,

Your Pa *wuz* pore! But neighbors they  
All liked him—all but one old man  
An' his old wife that folks all say  
Nobody liked, ner never can!

Yes, sir! an' Uncle purt' nigh swore  
About the mean old man an' way  
He treat' my Pa!—'cause he's a pore  
Farm-hand—but prouder 'an a king—  
An' ist work' on, he did, an' wore  
His old patched clo'es, ist anyway,  
So he saved up his wages—then  
He ist worked on an' saved some more,  
An' ist worked on, ist night an' day—  
Till, sir, he save' up nine or ten  
Er hunnerd dollars! But he keep  
All still about it, Uncle say—  
But he ist thinks—an' thinks a heap!  
Though what he wuz a-thinkin', Pa  
He never tell' a soul but Ma—  
(Then, course, you know, he wuzn't Pa,  
An', course, you know, she wuzn't Ma—  
They wuz ist sweethearts, course you know);  
'Cause Ma wuz ist a girl, about  
Sixteen; an' when my Pa he go  
A-courtin' her, her Pa an' Ma—  
The very first they find it out—

Wuz maddest folks you ever saw!  
'Cause it wuz her old Ma an' Pa  
'At hate my Pa, an' toss their head,  
An' ist raise Ned! An' her Pa said  
He'd ruther see his daughter dead!  
An' said she's ist a child!—an' so  
Wuz Pa!—An' ef he wuz man-grown  
An' only man on earth below,  
His daughter shouldn't marry him  
Ef he's a king an' on his throne!  
Pa's chances then looked mighty slim  
Fer certain, Uncle said. But he—  
He never told a soul but her  
What he wuz keepin' quiet fer.  
Her folks ist lived a mile from where  
He lived at—an' they drove past there  
To git to town. An' ever' one  
An' all the neighbors they liked her  
An' showed it! But her folks—no, sir!—  
Nobody liked her parunts none!  
An' so when they shet down, you know,  
On Pa—an' old man tell' him so—  
Pa ist went back to work, an' she  
Ist waited. An', sir! purty soon  
Her folks they thought he's turned his eye  
Some other way—'cause by-an'-by

They heard he'd *rented* the old place  
He worked on. An' one afternoon  
A neighbor, that had bu'st' a trace,  
*He* tell' the old man they wuz signs  
Around the old place that the young  
Man wuz a-fixin' up the old  
Log cabin some, an' he had brung  
New furnichur from town; an' told  
How th' old house 'uz whitewashed clean  
An' sweet—wiv mornin'-glory vines  
An' hollyhawks all 'round the door  
An' winders—an' a bran'-new floor  
In th' old porch—an' wite-new green-  
An'-red pump in the old sweep-well!  
An', Uncle said, when he hear tell  
O' all them things, the old man he  
Ist grin' an' says, he "reckon' now  
Some gal, er widder anyhow,  
That silly boy he's coaxed at last  
To marry him!" he says, says-ee,  
"An' ef he has, 'so mote it be'!"  
Then went back to the house to tell  
His *wife* the news, as he went past  
The smokehouse, an' then went on in  
The kitchen, where his daughter she  
Wuz washin', to tell *her*, an' grin  
An' try to worry her a spell!

The mean old thing! But Uncle said  
She ain't cry much—ist pull her old  
Sunbonnet forrerd on her head—  
So's old man he can't see her face  
At all! An' when he s'pose he scold'  
An' jaw enough, he ist clear' out  
An' think he's boss of all the place!

Then Uncle say, the first you know  
They's go' to be a Circus-show  
In town! an' old man think he'll take  
His wife an' go. An' when she say  
To take their daughter, too, *she* shake  
Her head like she don't *want* to go;  
An' when he sees she wants to stay,  
The old man takes her, anyway!  
An' so she went! But Uncle he  
Said she looked mighty sweet that day,  
Though she wuz pale as she could be,  
A-speshully a-drivin' by  
Wite where her beau lived at, you know;  
But out the corner of his eye  
The old man watch' her; but she throw  
Her pairsol 'round so she can't see  
The house at all! An' then she hear  
Her Pa an' Ma a-talkin' low  
And kind o' laughin'-like; but she

Ist set there in the seat behind,  
P'tendin' like she didn't mind.  
An', Uncle say, when they got past  
The young man's place, an' 'pearantly  
He wuzn't home, but off an' gone  
To town, the old man turned at last  
An' talked back to his daughter there,  
All pleasant-like, from then clean on  
Till they got into town, an' where  
The Circus wuz, an' on inside  
O' that, an' through the crowd, on to  
The very top seat in the tent  
Wite next the band—a-bangin' through  
A tune 'at bu'st his yeers in two!  
An' there the old man scrouged an' tried  
To make his wife set down, an' she  
A-yellin'! But ist what she meant  
He couldn't hear, ner couldn't see  
Till she turned 'round an' pinte. Then  
He turned an' looked—an' looked again! . .  
He ist saw neighbors ever'where—  
But, sir, *his daughter* wuzn't there!  
An', Uncle says, he even saw  
Her beau, you know, he hated so;  
An' he wuz with some other girl.  
An' then he heard the Clown "Haw-haw!"

An' saw the horses wheel an' whin'  
Around the ring, an' heard the zipp  
O' the Ringmaster's long slim whip—  
But that whole Circus, Uncle said,  
Wuz all inside the old man's head!

An' Uncle said, he didn't find  
His daughter all that afternoon—  
An' her Ma says she'll lose her mind  
Ef they don't find her purty soon!  
But, though they looked all day, an' stayed  
There fer the night p'formance—not  
No use at all!—they never laid  
Their eyes on her. An' then they got  
Their team out, an' the old man shook  
His fist at all the town, an' then  
Shook it up at the moon ag'in,  
An' said his time 'ud come, some day!  
An' jerked the lines an' driv away.

Uncle, he said, he 'spect, that night,  
The old man's madder yet when they  
Drive past the young man's place, an' hear  
A fiddle there, an' see a light  
Inside, an' shadders light an' gay

A-dancin' 'crost the winder-blinds.  
An' some young chaps outside yelled, "Say!  
What 'pears to be the hurry—hey?"  
But the old man ist whipped the lines  
An' streaked past like a runaway!  
An' now you'll be su'prised, I bet!—  
I hardly ain't quit laughin' yet  
When Uncle say, that jamboree  
An' dance an' all—w'y, that's a sign  
That any old man ort to see,  
As plain as 8 and 1 makes 9,  
That they's *a weddin'* wite inside  
That very house he's whippin' so  
To git apast—an', sir! the bride  
There's his own daughter! Yes, an' oh!  
She's my Ma now—an' young man she  
Got married, he's my Pa! *Whoop-ee!*  
But Uncle say to not laugh all  
The laughin' yet, but please save some  
To kind o' spice up what's to come!

Then Uncle say, about next day  
The neighbors they begin to call  
An' wish 'em well, an' say how glad  
An' proud an' tickled ever' way  
Their friends all is—an' how they had

The lovin' prayers of ever' one  
That had homes of their own! But none  
Said nothin' 'bout the home that she  
Had run away from! So she sighed  
Sometimes—an' wunst she purt' nigh cried.

Well, Uncle say, her old Pa, he  
Ist like to died, he wuz so mad!  
An' her Ma, too! But by-an'-by  
They cool down some.

An' 'bout a week,  
She want to see her Ma so bad,  
She think she'll haf to go! An' so  
She coax him; an' he kiss her cheek  
An' say, Lord bless her, *course* they'll go!  
An', Uncle say, when they're bofe come  
A-knockin' there at her old home—  
W'y, first he know, the door it flew  
Open, all quick, an' she's jerked in,  
An', quicker still, the door's banged to  
An' locked: an' crosst the winder-sill  
The old man pokes a shotgun through  
An' says to git! "You stold my child,"  
He says; "an', now she's back, w'y, you  
Clear out, this minute, er I'll kill  
You! Yes, an' I 'ull kill her, too,  
Ef you don't go!" An' then, all wild,

His young wife begs him please to go!  
An' so he turn' an' walk'—all slow  
An' pale as death, but awful still  
An' ca'm—back to the gate, an' on  
Into the road, where he had gone  
So many times alone, you know!  
An', Uncle say, a whipperwill  
Holler so lonesome, as he go  
On back to'rds home, he say he 'spec'  
He ist 'ud like to wring its neck!  
An' I ain't think he's goin' back  
All by hisse'f—but Uncle say  
That's what he does, an' it's a fac'!

An' 'pears-like he's gone back to *stay*—  
'Cause there he stick', ist thataway,  
An' don't go nowheres any more,  
Ner don't nobody ever see  
Him set his foot outside the door—  
Till 'bout five days, a boy loped down  
The road, a-comin' past from town,  
An' he called to him from the gate,  
An' sent the old man word: He's thought  
Things over now; an', while he hate  
To lose his wife, he think she ought  
To mind her Pa an' Ma an' do  
Whatever *they* advise her to.

An' sends words, too, to come an' git  
Her new things an' the furnichur  
That he had special' bought fer her—  
'Cause, now that they wuz goin' to quit,  
She's free to ist have all of it;—  
So, fer his love fer her, he say  
To come an' git it, wite away.  
An' spang! that very afternoon,  
Here come her Ma—ist 'bout as soon  
As old man could hitch up an' tell  
Her "hurry back!" An' 'bout as quick  
As she's drove there to where my Pa—  
I mean to where her son-in-law—  
Lives at, he meets her at the door  
All smilin', though he's awful pale  
An' trimbly—like he's ist been sick;  
He take her in the house—An', 'fore  
She knows it, they's a cellar-door  
Shet on her, an' she hears the click  
Of a' old rusty padlock! Then,  
Uncle, he say, she kind o' stands  
An' thinks—an' thinks—an' thinks ag'in—  
An' mayby thinks of her own child  
Locked up—like her! An' Uncle smiled,  
An' I ist laughed an' clapped my hands!

An' there she stayed! An' she can cry  
Ist all she want! an' yell an' kick  
To ist her heart's content! an' try  
To pry out wiv a quiltin'-stick!  
But Uncle say he guess at last  
She 'bout give up, an' holler' through  
The door-crack fer to please to be  
So kind an' good as send an' tell  
The old man, like she want him to,  
To come, 'fore night, an' set her free,  
Er—they wuz rats down there! An' yell  
She did, till, Uncle say, it soured  
The morning's milk in the back yard!  
But all the answer reached her, where  
She's skeered so in the dark down there,  
Wuz ist a mutterin' that she heard—  
*"I've sent him word!—I've sent him word!"*  
An' shore enough, as Uncle say,  
He *has* "sent word!"

Well, it's plum night  
An' all the house is shet up tight—  
Only one winder 'bout half-way  
Raised up, you know; an' ain't no light  
Inside the whole house, Uncle say.

Then, first you know, there where the team  
Stands hitched yet, there the old man stands—  
A' old tin lantern in his hands  
An' monkey-wrench; an' he don't seem  
To make things out, a-standin' there.  
He comes on to the gate an' feels  
An' fumbles fer the latch—then hears  
A voice that chills him to the heels—  
“You halt! an' stand right where you air!”  
Then, sir! my—my—his son-in-law,  
There at the winder wiv his gun,  
He tell the old man what he's done:  
“You hold *my* wife a prisoner—  
An' *your* wife, drat ye! I've got *her*!  
An' now, sir,” Uncle say he say,  
“You ist turn round an' climb wite in  
That wagon, an' drive home ag'in  
An' bring my wife back wite away,  
An' we'll trade then—an' not before  
Will I unlock my cellar-door—  
Not fer your wife's sake ner your own,  
But *my* wife's sake—an' hers alone!”  
An', Uncle say, it don't sound like  
It's so, but yet it is!—He say,  
From wite then, somepin' seem' to strike  
The old man's funny-bone some way;

An', minute more, that team o' his  
Went tearin' down the road *k'whiz!*  
An' in the same two-forty style  
Come whizzin' back! An' oh, that-air  
Sweet girl a-cryin' all the while,  
Thinkin' about her Ma there, shet  
In her own daughter's cellar, where  
Ist week or so *she's* kep' house there,  
She hadn't time to clean it yet!  
So when her Pa an' her they git  
There—an' the young man grab' an' kiss  
An' hug her, till she make him quit  
An' ask him where her mother is.  
An' then he smile' an' try to not;  
Then slow-like find th' old padlock key,  
An' blow a' oat-hull out of it,  
An' then stoop down there where he's got  
Her Ma locked up so keerfully—  
An' where, wite there, he say he thought  
It *ort* to been *the old man*—though  
Uncle, he say, he reckon not—  
When out she bounced, all tickled so  
To taste fresh air ag'in an' find  
Her folks wunst more, an' grab' her child  
An' cry an' laugh, an' even go

An' hug the old man; an' he wind  
Her in his arms, an' laugh, an' pat  
Her back, an' say he's riconciled,  
In such a happy scene as that,  
To swap his daughter for her Ma,  
An' have so smart a son-in-law  
As *they* had! "Yes, an' he's my Pa!"  
I laugh' an' yell', "Hooray-hooraw!"

## THE RAMBO-TREE

**W**HEN Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

The bird sings low as the bumble bee—

It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

The poor shote-pig he says, says he:

"When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree

There's enough for you and enough for me."—

It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,*

*When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree*

*There's enough for you and enough for me—*

*It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—

It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

The mole digs out to peep and see—

It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

The dusk sags down, and the moon swings free,  
There's a far, lorn call, "Pig-gee! Pig-gee!"  
And two boys—glad enough for three.—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,  
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree  
There's enough for you and enough for me—  
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

## THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER

**T**HE summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin'  
locus' trees;  
And the clover in the pastur is a big day fer the  
bees,

And they been a-swiggin' honey, above board and on the  
sly,

Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they fly.  
The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his  
wings

And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;  
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his forelegs fer biz,  
And the off-mare is a-switchin' all of her tale they is.

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up the  
plow—

Oh, theyr bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not  
a-carin' how;

So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on the  
wing—

But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other thing:

And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy rest,  
She's as full of tribbellation as a yeller-jacket's nest;  
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-shinin'  
right,  
Seems to kindo'-sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to-day,  
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,  
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is greener  
still;  
It may rain again to-morry, but I don't think it will.  
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drowned  
out,  
And prophasy the wheat will be a failure, without  
doubt;  
But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,  
Will be on hands onc't more at the 'leventh hour, I bet!

Does the medder-lark complane, as he swims high and  
dry  
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?  
Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappointed way,  
Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?

Is the chipmuck's health a-failin'? —Does he walk, er  
does he run?

Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare jest like they've  
allus done?

Is they anything the matter with the rooster's lungs er  
voice?

Ort a mortul be complanin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;  
The June is here this mornin', and the sun is shining hot.  
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,  
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur away!  
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,  
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;  
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,  
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer me  
and you.

## A SUMMER'S DAY

**T**HE SUMMER'S put the idy in  
My head that I'm a boy ag'in;  
And all around's so bright and gay  
I want to put my team away,  
And jest git out whare I can lay  
And soak my hide full of the day!  
But work is work, and must be done—  
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,  
Jest fancyin' these furries here  
Is childhood's paths onc't more so dear:—  
And so I walk through medder-lands,  
And country lanes, and swampy trails  
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;  
And, tilted on the ridered rails  
Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"  
Whissels his name in high delight,  
And whirrs away. I wunder still,  
Whichever way a boy's feet will—

Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops

Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,  
Heerin' the acorn as it drops—

H'istin' my chin up still as deth,  
And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,  
The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries  
To hide hisse'f above the limb,  
But lets his own tale tell on him.  
I wunder on in deeper glooms—

Git hungry, hearin' female cries  
From old farm-houses, whare perfumes  
Of harvest dinners seems to rise  
And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,  
With memories he can't explane.

I wunder through the underbresh,  
Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,  
Is picked and printed in the fresh

Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick  
Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,  
When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.

I wunder on and on and on,  
Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,  
And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow  
Is rubbed clean out and shaddered now  
With curls as brown and fare and fine  
As tenderls of the wild grape-vine

That ust to climb the highest tree  
To keep the ripest ones fer me.  
I wunder still, and here I am  
Wadin' the ford below the dam—  
The worter chucklin' round my knee  
    At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,  
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see  
    Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size  
    The old man's wortermelon-patch,  
    With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.  
Then, after sich a day of mirth  
And happiness as worlds is wurth—  
    So tired that Heaven seems nigh about,—  
The sweetest tiredness on earth  
    Is to git home and flatten out—  
So tired you can't lay flat enough,  
And sorto' wish that you could spread  
Out like molasses on the bed,  
And jest drip off the aidges in  
The dreams that never comes ag'in.

## A TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS

**O**H! TELL me a tale of the airy days—  
Of the times as they used to be;  
“Piller of Fi-er” and “Shakespeare’s Plays”  
Is a’ most too deep fer me!  
I want plane facts, and I want plane words,  
Of the good old-fashioned ways,  
When speech run free as the songs of birds  
’Way back in the airy days.

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—  
Of the old-time pioneers;  
Somepin’ a pore man understands  
With his feelin’s ’s well as ears.  
Tell of the old log house,—about  
The loft, and the puncheon flore—  
The old fi-er-place, with the crane swung out,  
And the latch-string through the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—  
They don't need no excuse!—  
Don't tetch 'em up like the poets does,  
Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—  
Say they was 'leven in the fambily—  
Two beds, and the chist, below,  
And the trundle-beds that each helt three,  
And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door  
Tel the echoes all halloo,  
And the childern gethers home onc't more,  
Jest as they ust to do:  
Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,  
With Tomps and Elias, too,  
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums  
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low  
As the moan of the whipperwill,  
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,  
All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:  
Blow and call tel the faces all  
Shine out in the back-log's blaze,  
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall  
As they did in the airly days.

## UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE

UP AND DOWN old Brandywine,  
In the days 'at's past and gone—  
With a dad-burn hook-and-line  
And a saplin'-pole—i swawn!  
I've had more fun, to the square  
Inch, than ever *anywhere*!  
Heaven to come can't discount *mine*,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

Hain't no sense in *wishin'* yit  
Wisht to goodness I *could* jes'  
"Gee" the blame' world round and git  
Back to that old happiness!—  
Kind o' drive back in the shade  
"The old Covered Bridge" there laid  
'Crosst the crick, and sort o' soak  
My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no *dream*  
'At I'm wantin',—but *the fac's*  
As they wuz; the same old stream,  
And the same old times, i jacks!—  
Gimme back my bare feet—and  
Stonebruise too!—And scratched and  
tanned!—  
And let hottest dog-days shine  
Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees  
'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,  
Kind o' curdled with the breeze  
And the yallerhammer's tune;  
And the smokin', chokin' dust  
O' the turnpike at its wusht—  
*Saturd'ys, say*, when it seems  
Road's jes' jammed with country teams!—

Whilse the old town, fur away  
'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,  
Dozed-like in the heat o' day  
Peaceful' as a hired hand.  
Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor  
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar  
With yer blame' percession-line—  
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw-hat  
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—  
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—  
Like the old Clown ust to wear.—  
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old  
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—  
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gimme  
Jes' the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal  
My best "goggle-eye!"—but you  
Can't lay hands on joys I feel  
Nibblin' like they ust to do!  
So, in memory, to-day  
Same old ripple lips away  
At my cork and saggin' line,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,  
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift  
Out sunfish from daylight till  
Dewfall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"  
And give *us* a chance—and then  
Kind o' fish back home again,  
Ketchin' 'em jes' left and right  
Where *we* hadn't got "a bite"!

Er, 'way windin' out and in,—  
Old path th'ough the iurnweeds  
And dog-fennel to yer chin—  
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds  
And cattails, smack into where  
Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare  
Us clean 'crosst the County-line,  
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam  
It 'ud coax us funder still  
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,  
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—  
Where, I 'spect, "the Freeport crowd"  
Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed  
We wuz quite so overly  
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—  
Fur away from home as *there*—  
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—  
Fish in stream, er bird in air!  
O them rich old bottom-lands,  
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!  
Wortermelons—*master-mine*!  
Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw  
Gold and green,—jes' oozy th'ough  
With ripe yaller—like you've saw  
Custard-pie with no crust to:  
And jes' *gorges* o' wild plums,  
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs  
Clean up to his elbows! *My!*—  
*Me some more er lem me die!*

Up and down old Brandywine!  
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—  
Flick me with a pizen-vine  
And yell “*Yip!*” and lem me loose!  
—Old now as I then wuz young,  
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,  
Song 'ud surely ring *dee-vine*  
Up and down old Brandywine!

## UNCLE DAN'L IN TOWN OVER SUNDAY

**I** CAIN'T git used to city ways—  
Ner ever could, I' bet my hat!  
Jevver know jes' whur I was raised? —  
Raised on a farm! D' ever tell you that?  
Was undoubtatly, I declare!  
And now, on Sunday—fun to spare  
Around a farm! Why jes' to set  
Up on the top three-cornered rail  
Of Pap's old place, nigh La Fayette,  
I'd swap my soul off, hide and tail!  
You fellers in the city here,  
You don't know nothin'! —S'pose to-day,  
This clatterin' Sunday, you waked up  
Without no jinglin'-janglin' bells,  
Ner rattlin' of the milkman's cup,  
Ner any swarm of screechin' birds  
Like these here English swallers—S'pose  
Ut you could miss all noise like those,  
And git shet o' thinkin' of 'em afterwerds,

And then, in the country, wake and hear  
Nothin' but silence—wake and see  
Nothin' but green woods fur and near?—  
What sort o' Sunday would that be? . . .  
Wisht I hed you home with me!  
Now think! The laziest of all days—  
To git up any time—er sleep—  
Er jes' lay round and watch the haze  
A-dancin' 'crost the wheat, and keep  
My pipe a-goern laisurely,  
And puff and whiff as pleases me—  
And ef I leave a trail of smoke  
Clean through the house, no one to say,  
“Wah! throw that nasty thing away;  
Hev some regyard fer decency!”  
To walk round barefoot, if you choose;  
Er saw the fiddle—er dig some bait  
And go a-fishin'—er pitch hoss shoes  
Out in the shade somewhurs, and wait  
For dinner-time, with an appetite  
Ut folks in town cain't equal quite!  
To laze around the barn and poke  
Fer hens' nests—er git up a match  
Betwixt the boys, and watch 'em scratch

And rassle round, and sweat and swear  
And quarrel to their hearts' content;  
And me a-jes' a-settin' there  
A-hatchin' out more devilment!  
What sort o' Sunday would that be? . . .  
Wisht I hed you home with me!

## WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES

**I**N SPRING, when the green gits back in the trees,  
And the sun comes out and *stays*,  
And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,  
And you think of yer barefoot days;  
When you *ort* to work and you want to *not*,  
And you and yer wife agrees  
It's time to spade up the garden-lot,  
When the green gits back in the trees—  
Well! work is the least o' *my* idees  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees  
Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in,  
In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please  
Old gait they bum roun' in;  
When the groun's all bald where the hay-rick stood,  
And the crick's riz, and the breeze  
Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,  
And the green gits back in the trees,—

I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,  
The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-feathers o' Winter-time  
Is all pulled out and gone!  
And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,  
And the swet it starts out on  
A feller's forred, a-gittin' down  
At the old spring on his knees—  
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'  
When the green gits back in the trees—  
Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—  
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

## DOC SIFERS

**O**F ALL the doctors I could cite you to in this-  
'ere town  
Doc Sifers is my favorite, jes' take him up and  
down!

Count in the Bethel Neighborhood, and Rollins, and Big  
Bear,  
And Sifers' standin's jes' as good as ary doctor's there!

There's old Doc Wick, and Glenn, and Hall, and  
Wurgler, and McVeigh,  
But I'll buck Sifers 'g'inst 'em all and down 'em any  
day!

Most old Wick ever knowed, I s'pose, was *whisky*!  
Wurgler—well,  
He et morphine—ef actions shows, and facts' reliable!

But Sifers—though he ain't no sot, he's got his faults;  
and yit  
When you *git* Sifers onc't, you've got *a doctor*, don't  
fergit!

He ain't much at his office, er his house, er anywhere  
You'd natchurly think certain fer to ketch the feller  
there.—

But don't blame Doc: he's got all sorts o' cur'ous notions—as

The feller says, his odd-come-shorts, like smart men  
mostly has.

He'll more'n like be potter'n' 'round the Blacksmith  
Shop; er in

Some back lot, spadn' up the ground, er gradin' it ag'in.

Er at the work bench, planin' things; er buildin' little  
traps

To ketch birds; galvenizin' rings; er graftin' plums, perhaps.

Make anything! good as the best!—a gun-stock—er a  
flute;

He whittled out a set o' chesstmen onc't o' laurel root,

Durin' the Army—got his trade o' surgeon there—I  
own

To-day a finger-ring Doc made out of a Sesesh bone!

An' glued a fiddle onc't fer me—jes' all so busted you  
'D 'a' throwed the thing away, but he fixed her as good  
as new!

And take Doc, now, in *ager*, say, er *biles*, er *rheumatiz*,  
And all afflictions thataway, and he's the best they is!  
Er janders—milksick—I don't keer—k-yore anything  
he tries—

A abscess; getherin' in yer yeer; er granilated eyes!

There was the Widder Daubenspeck they all give up fer  
dead;

A blame cowbuncle on her neck, and clean out of her  
head!

First had this doctor, what's-his-name, from "Puddles-  
burg," and then

This little red-head, "Burnin' Shame" they call him—  
Dr. Glenn.

And they "consulted" on the case, and claimed she'd haf  
to die, —

I jes' was joggin' by the place, and heerd her dorter cry,  
And stops and calls her to the fence; and I-says-I, "Let  
me

Send Sifers—bet you fifteen cents he'll k-yore her!"  
"Well," says she,

"Light out!" she says: And, lipp-tee-cut I loped in town,  
and rid

'Bout two hours more to find him, but I kussed him when  
I did!

He was down at the Gunsmith Shop a-stuffin' birds!  
Says he,  
"My sulky's broke." Says I, "You hop right on and ride  
with me!"

I got him there.—"Well, Aunty, ten days k-yores you,"  
Sifers said,  
"But what's yer idy livin' when yer jes' as good as  
dead?"  
And there's Dave Banks—jes' back from war without a  
scratch—one day  
Got ketched up in a sickle-bär, a reaper runaway.—

His shoulders, arms, and hands and legs jes' sawed in  
strips! And Jake  
Dunn starts fer Sifers—feller begs to shoot him fer God-  
sake.  
Doc, 'course, was gone, but he had penned the notice,  
"At Big Bear—  
Be back to-morry; Gone to 'tend the Bee Convention  
there."

But Jake, he tracked him—rid and rode the whole en-  
durin' night!  
And 'bout the time the roosters crowed they both hove  
into sight.

Doc had to amputate, but 'greed to save Dave's arms, and  
swore

He could 'a' saved his legs ef he'd b'en there the day  
before.

Like when his wife's own mother died 'fore Sifers could  
be found,

And all the neighbors fer and wide a' all jes' chasin'  
round;

Tel finally—I had to laugh—it's jes' like Doc, you  
know,—

Was learnin' fer to telegraph, down at the old deepo.

But all they're faultin' Sifers fer, there's none of 'em  
kin say

He's biggoty, er keerless, er not posted anyway;

He ain't built on the common plan of doctors now-a-  
days,

He's jes' a great, big, brainy man—that's where the  
trouble lays!

## DOWN AROUND THE RIVER

**N** OON-TIME and June-time, down around the river!

Have to furse with Lizey Ann—but lawzy! I fergive her!

Drives me off the place, and says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',

Land o' gracious! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin'!

Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice;

Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his coat is,—

Specalatin', more'n like, he hain't a-goin' to mind me,  
And guessin' where, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely find me.

Noon-time and June-time, down around the river!

Clean out o' sight o' home, and skulkin' under kiver  
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, and swamp-ash and el-lum—

Idies all so jumbled up you kin hardly tell 'em!—

Tired, you know, but *lovin'* it, and smilin' jes' to think  
'at

Any sweeter tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it.

Tired o' fishin'—tired o' fun—line out slack and  
slacker—

All you want in all the world's a little more tobacker!

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-kerrin':—

Kingfisher gittin' up and skootin' out o' hearin';

Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch is,  
Wadin' up and down the aidge like they'd rolled their  
britches!

Old turkle on the root kind o' sort o' drappin'

Intoo th' worter like he don't know how it happen!

Worter, shade and all so mixed, don't know which you'd  
orter

Say, th' *worter* in the shadder—*shadder* in the *worter*.

Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in

Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the endin'

Of the shiney wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-makin'

With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,

Corn-bread and 'dock-greens—and little Dave a-shinnin'

'Crost the rocks and mussel-shells, a-limpin' and a-  
grinnin',

With yer dinner fer ye, and a blessin' from the giver.

Noon-time and June-time down around the river!

## HIS ROOM

**I**'M home again, my dear old Room,  
I'm home again, and happy, too,  
As, peering through the brightening gloom,  
I find myself alone with you:  
Though brief my stay, nor far away,  
I missed you—missed you night and day—  
As wildly yearned for you as now.—  
Old Room, how are you, anyhow?

My easy chair, with open arms,  
Awaits me just within the door;  
The littered carpet's woven charms  
Have never seemed so bright before,—  
The old rosettes and mignonettes  
And ivy-leaves and violets,  
Look up as pure and fresh of hue  
As though baptized in morning-dew.

Old Room, to me your homely walls  
Fold round me like the arms of love,  
And over all my being falls  
A blessing pure as from above—

Even as a nestling child caressed  
And lulled upon a loving breast,  
With folded eyes, too glad to weep  
And yet too sad for dreams or sleep.

You've been so kind to me, old Room—  
So patient in your tender care,  
My drooping heart in fullest bloom  
Has blossomed for you unaware;  
And who but you had cared to woo  
A heart so dark, and heavy too,  
As in the past you lifted mine  
From out the shadow to the shine?

For I was but a wayward boy  
When first you gladly welcomed me  
And taught me work was truer joy  
Than rioting incessantly:  
And thus the din that stormed within  
The old guitar and violin  
Has fallen in a fainter tone  
And sweeter, for your sake alone.

Though in my absence I have stood  
In festal halls a favored guest,  
I missed, in this old quietude,  
My worthy work and worthy rest—

By *this* I know that long ago  
You loved me first, and told me so  
In art's mute eloquence of speech  
The voice of praise may never reach.

For lips and eyes in truth's disguise  
Confuse the faces of my friends,  
Till old affection's fondest ties  
I find unraveling at the ends;  
But, as I turn to you, and learn  
To meet my griefs with less concern,  
Your love seems all I have to keep  
Me smiling lest I needs must weep.

Yet I am happy, and would fain  
Forget the world and all its woes;  
So set me to my tasks again,  
Old Room, and lull me to repose:  
And as we glide adown the tide  
Of dreams, forever side by side,  
I'll hold your hands as lovers do  
Their sweethearts' and talk love to you.

## CUORED O' SKEERIN'

**L**ISH, you rickollect that-air  
Dad-burn skittish old bay mare  
Was no livin' with!—'at skeerd  
'T ever'thing she seed er heerd!—  
Th'owed 'Ves' Anders, and th'owed Pap,  
First he straddled her—*k-slap!*—  
And Izory—well!—th'owed *her*,  
Hain't no tellin' jest how fur!—  
Broke her collar-bone—and might  
Jest 'a' kilt the gyrl outright!

Course I'd heerd 'em make their boast  
She th'ow any feller, 'most,  
Ever topped her! S' I, "I know  
*One* man 'at she'll never th'ow!"  
So I rid her into mill,  
And, jest comin' round the hill,  
Met a *traction-engine!*—Ort  
Jest 'a' heerd that old mare snort,  
And lay back her yeers, and see  
Her a-tryin' to th'ow *me!*

Course I never said a word,  
But thinks I, "My ladybird,  
You'll git cuored, right here and now,  
Of yer dy-does anyhow!"  
So I stuck her—tel she'd jest  
Done her very level best;  
Then I slides off—strips the lines  
Over her fool-head, and finds  
Me a little saplin'-gad,  
'Side the road:—And there we had  
Our own fun!—jest wore her out!  
Mounted her, and faced about,  
And jest made her *nose* that-air  
Little traction-engine there!

## FARMER WHIPPLE.—BACHELOR

**I**T'S a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year'  
and more—  
A-lookin' glad and smilin'! And they's none o' you can  
say  
That you can guess the reason why I feel so good to-day!

I must tell you all about it! But I'll have to deviate  
A little in beginnin' so's to set the matter straight  
As to how it comes to happen that I never took a wife—  
Kind o' "crawfish" from the Present to the Spring-time  
of my life!

I was brought up in the country: Of a family of five—  
Three brothers and a sister—I'm the only one alive,—  
Fer they all died little babies; and 'twas one o' Mother's  
ways,  
You know, to want a daughter; so she took a girl to raise.

The sweetest little thing she was, with rosy cheeks, and  
fat—

We was little chunks o' shavers then about as high as  
that!

But some way we sort o' *suited*-like! and Mother she'd  
declare

She never laid her eyes on a more lovin' pair

Than *we* was! So we growed up side by side fer thirteen  
year',

And every hour of it she growed to me more dear!—

W'y, even Father's dyin', as he did, I do believe

Warn't more affectin' to me than it was to see her grieve!

I was then a lad o' twenty; and I felt a flash o' pride

In thinkin' all depended on *me* now to pervide

Fer Mother and fer Mary; and I went about the place

With sleeves rolled up—and workin', with a mighty  
smilin' face.—

Fer *sompin' else* was workin'! but not a word I said

Of a certain sort o' notion that was runnin' through my  
head,—

“Some day I'd maybe marry, and a *brother's* love was one  
Thing—a *lover's* was another!” was the way the notion  
run!

I remember onc't in harvest, when the “cradle-in” was  
done—

(When the harvest of my summers mounted up to  
twenty-one),

I was ridin' home with Mary at the closin' o' the day—  
A-chawin' straws and thinkin', in a lover's lazy way!

And Mary's cheeks was burnin' like the sunset down the  
lane:

I noticed she was thinkin', too, and ast her to explain.

Well—when she turned and *kissed me, with her arms  
around me—law!*

I'd a bigger load o' Heaven than I had a load o' straw!

I don't p'tend to learnin', but I'll tell you what's a fac',  
They's a mighty truthful sayin' somers in a almanac—  
Er *somers*—'bout "puore happiness"—perhaps some  
folk'll laugh

At the idy—"only lastin' jest two seconds and a half."—

But it's jest as true as preachin'!—fer that was a *sister's*  
kiss,

And a sister's lovin' confidence a-tellin' to me this:—

"*She was happy, bein' promised to the son o' farmer  
Brown.*"—

And my feelin's struck a pardnership with sunset and  
went down!

I don't know *how* I acted, I don't know *what* I said,—  
Fer my heart seemed jest a-turnin' to an ice-cold lump o'  
lead;

And the hosses kind o' glimmered before me in the road,  
And the lines fell from my fingers—And that was all  
I knowed—

Fer—well, I don't know *how* long—They's a dim re-  
memberence

Of a sound o' snortin' hosses, and a stake-and-ridered  
fence

A-whizzin' past, and wheat-sheaves a-dancin' in the  
air,

And Mary screamin' "Murder!" and a-runnin' up to  
where

I was layin' by the roadside, and the wagon upside down  
A-leanin' on the gate-post, with the wheels a-whirlin'  
round!

And I tried to raise and meet her, but I couldn't, with a  
vague

Sort o' notion comin' to me that I had a broken leg.

Well, the women nussed me through it; but many a  
time I'd sigh

As I'd keep a-gittin' better instid o' goin' to die,

And wonder what was left *me* worth livin' fer below,

When the girl I loved was married to another, don't you  
know!

And my thoughts was as rebellious as the folks was good  
and kind

When Brown and Mary married—Raily must 'a' been  
my *mind*

Was kind o' out o' kilter!—fer I hated Brown, you see,  
Worse'n *pizen*—and the feller whittled crutches out fer  
*me*—

And done a thousand little ac's o' kindness and respec'—  
And me a-wishin' all the time that I could break his  
neck!

My relief was like a mourner's when the funeral is done  
When they moved to Illinois in the Fall o' Forty-one.

Then I went to work in airnest—I had nothin' much in  
view

But to drownd out rickollections—and it kep' me busy,  
too!

But I slowly thrived and prospered, tel Mother used to  
say

She expected yit to see me a wealthy man some day.

Then I'd think how little *money* was, compared to hap-  
piness—

And who'd be left to use it when I died I couldn't guess!  
But I've still kep' speculatin' and a-gainin' year by year,  
Tel I'm payin' half the taxes in the county, mighty near!

Well!—A year ago er better, a letter comes to hand  
Astin' how I'd like to dicker fer some Illinois land—  
“The feller that had owned it,” it went ahead to state,  
“Had jest deceased, insolvent, leavin' chance to speculate,”—

And then it closed by sayin' that I'd “better come and see.”—

I'd never been West, anyhow—a'most too wild fer *me*,  
I'd allus had a notion; but a lawyer here in town  
Said I'd find myself mistakend when I come to look  
around.

So I bids good-by to Mother, and I jumps aboard the  
train,  
A-thinkin' what I'd bring her when I come back home  
again—

And ef she'd had an idy what the present was to be,  
I think it's more'n likely she'd 'a' went along with me!

Cars is awful tejus ridin', fer all they go so fast!  
But finally they called out my stoppin'-place at last:  
And that night, at the tavern, I dreamp' I was a train  
O' cars, and *skeered* at somepin', runnin' down a country  
lane!

Well, in the mornin' airly—after huntin' up the man—  
The lawyer who was wantin' to swap the piece o' land—  
We started fer the country; and I ast the history  
Of the farm—its former owner—and so forth, etcetery!

And—well—it was *interestin'*—I su'prised him, I suppose

By the loud and frequent manner in which I blowed my  
nose!—

But his su'prise was greater, and it made him wonder  
more,

When I kissed and hugged the widder when she met us  
at the door!—

*It was Mary:* . . . They's a feelin' a-hidin' down in  
here—

Of course I can't explain it, ner ever make it clear.—

It was with us in that meetin', I don't want you to fergit!  
And it makes me kind o' nervous when I think about it  
yit!

I *bought* that farm, and *deeded* it, afore I left the town,  
With "title clear to mansions in the skies," to Mary  
Brown!

And fu'thermore, I took her and the *childern*—fer you  
see,

They'd never seed their Grandma—and I fetched 'em  
home with me.

So *now* you've got an idy why a man o' fifty-four,  
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and  
more,  
Is a-lookin' glad and smilin'!—And I've jest come into  
town  
To git a pair o' license fer to *marry* Mary Brown.

## 'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET

**M**ONGST the Hills o' Somerset  
Wisht I was a-roamin' yet!  
My feet won't get usen to  
These low lands I'm trompin' through.  
Wisht I could go back there, and  
Stroke the long grass with my hand,  
Kind o' like my sweetheart's hair  
Smoothed out underneath it there!  
Wisht I could set eyes once more  
On our shadders, on before,  
Climbin', in the airy dawn,  
Up the slopes 'at love grewed on  
Natchurl as the violet  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

How 't 'u'd rest a man like me  
Jes' fer 'bout an hour to be  
Up there where the morning air  
Could reach out and ketch me there!—  
Snatch my breath away, and then  
Rensh and give it back again

Fresh as dew, and smellin' of  
The old pinks I ust to love,  
And a-flavor'n' ever' breeze  
With mixt hints o' mulberries  
And May-apples, from the thick  
Bottom-lands along the crick  
Where the fish bit, dry er wet,  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things  
All comes back: the bluebird swings  
In the maple, tongue and bill  
Trillin' glory fit to kill!  
In the orchard, jay and bee  
Ripens the first pears fer me,  
And the "Prince's Harvest" they  
Tumble to me where I lay  
In the clover, provin' still  
"A boy's will is the wind's will."  
Clean fergot is time, and care,  
And thick hearin', and gray hair—  
But they's nothin' I ferget  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzact,  
*Very* middle-aged, in fact,—

Yet a-thinkin' back to then,  
I'm the same wild boy again!  
There's the dear old home once more,  
And there's Mother at the door—  
Dead, I know, fer thirty year',  
Yet she's singin', and I hear;  
And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,  
And Pap, comin' up the lane!  
Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,  
'Pears like, it's a-fallin' too—  
Dreamin' we're all livin' yet  
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

## OLD JOHN HENRY

**O**LD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff—  
Old John Henry—  
He's tough, I reckon,—but none too tough—  
Too tough though's better than not enough!

Says old John Henry.

He does his best, and when his best's bad,  
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad—  
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:

Old John Henry!

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand—

Old John Henry—

A smilin' face and a hearty hand  
'S religen 'at all folks understand,

Says old John Henry.

He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,  
And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,  
And his hair hain't cut—but his eye-teeth is:

Old John Henry!

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed—

Old John Henry—

And sleeps like a babe when he goes to bed—

And dreams o' Heaven and home-made bread,

Says old John Henry.

He hain't refined as he'd ort to be

To fit the statutes o' poetry,

Ner his clothes don't fit him—but *he fits me*:

Old John Henry!

## “HOME AG’IN”

**I**’M a-feelin’ ruther sad,  
Fer a father proud and glad  
As *I* am—my only child  
Home, and all so rickonciled!  
Feel so strange-like, and don’t know  
What the mischief ails me so!  
’Stid o’ bad, I ort to be  
Feelin’ good pertickerly—  
Yes, and extry thankful, too,  
’Cause my nearest kith and kin,  
My Elviry’s schoolin’ ’s through,  
And I’ got her home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!

Same as ef her mother’d been  
Livin’, I have done my best  
By the girl, and watchfulest;  
Nussed her—keerful’ as I could—  
From a baby, day and night,—  
Drawin’ on the neighborhood  
And the women-folks as light

As needssesity 'ud 'low—  
'Cept in "teethin'," onc't, and fight  
Through black-measles. Don't know now  
How we ever saved the child!  
Doc *he'd* give her up, and said,  
As I stood there by the bed  
Sort o' foolin' with her hair  
On the hot, wet pillar there,  
"Wuz no use!"—And at them-air  
Very words she waked and smiled—  
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that's where  
I broke down, and simply jes'  
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—  
*Women* claim I did, but I  
Allus helt I didn't cry  
But wuz laughin',—and I *wuz*,—  
Men don't cry like *women* does!  
Well, right then and there I felt  
'T 'uz her mother's doin's, and,  
Jes' like to mys'f, I knelt  
Whisperin', "I understand." . . .  
So I've raised her, you might say,  
Stric'ly in the narrer way  
'At her mother walked therein—  
Not so quite religiously,

Yit still strivin'-like to do  
Ever'thing a father *could*  
Do he knowed the *mother* would  
Ef she'd lived—And now all's through  
And I' got her home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!

And I' been so lonesome, too,  
Here o' late, especially,—  
“Old Aunt Abigail,” you know,  
Ain't no company;—and so  
Jes' the hired hand, you see—  
Jonas—like a relative  
More—sence he come here to live  
With us, nigh ten year' ago.  
Still he don't count much, you know,  
In the way o' company—  
Lonesome, 'peared-like, 'most as me!  
So, as *I* say, I' been so  
Special lonesome-like and blue,  
With Elviry, like she's been,  
'Way so much, last two or three  
Year'—But now she's home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!  
Driv in fer her yisterday,  
Me and Jonas—gay and sry,—  
We jes' cut up, all the way!—

Yes, and sung!—tel, blame it! I  
Keyed my voice up 'bout as high  
As when—days 'at I wuz young—  
“Buckwheat-notes” wuz all they sung.  
Jonas bantered me, and 'greed  
To sing one 'at town-folks sing  
Down at Split Stump 'er High-Low—  
Some new “ballet,” said he, 'at he'd  
Learnt—about “The Grape-vine Swing.”  
And when *he* quit, *I* begun  
To chune up my voice and run  
Through the what's-called “scales” and “do  
Sol-me-fa's” *I ust* to know—  
Then let loose old *favorite* one,  
“Hunters o' Kentucky!” *My!*  
Tel I thought the boy would *die!*  
And we *both* laughed—Yes, and still  
Heerd more laughin', top the hill;  
Fer we'd missed Elviry's train,  
And she'd lit out 'crost the fields,—  
Dewdrops dancin' at her heels,  
And cut up old Smoots's lane  
So's to meet us. And there in  
Shadder o' the chinkypin,  
With a danglin' dogwood-bough  
Bloomin' 'bove her—See her now!—  
Sunshine sort o' flickerin' down

And a kind o' laughin' all  
Round her new red parasol,  
Tryin' to git at *her!*—well—like  
*I* jumped out and showed 'em how—  
Yes, and jes' the place to strike  
That-air mouth o' hern—as sweet  
As the blossoms breshed her brow  
Er sweet-williams round her feet—  
White and blushy, too, as she  
“Howdied” up to Jonas, and  
Jieuked her head, and waved her hand.  
“Hey!” says *I*, as she bounced in  
The spring-wagon, reachin' back  
To give *me* a lift, “whoop-ee!”  
*I*-says-ee, “you're home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!”

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,  
Gittin' home!—and things she had  
To inquire about, and talk—  
Plowin', plantin', and the stock—  
News o' neighborhood; and how  
Wuz the Deem-girls doin' now,  
Sence that-air young chicken-hawk  
They was “tamin' ” soared away  
With their settin'-hen, one day?—

(Said she'd got Mame's postal-card  
'Bout it, very day 'at she  
Started home from Bethany.)  
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—  
Er wuz stores still claimin' "hard  
Times," as usual? And, says she,  
Troubled-like, "How's Deedie—say?  
Sence pore child e-loped away  
And got back, and goin' to 'ply  
Fer school-license by and by—  
And where's 'Lijy workin' at?  
And how's 'Aunt' and 'Uncle Jake'?  
How wuz 'Old Maje'—and the cat?  
And wuz Marthy's baby fat  
As his 'Humpty-Dumpty' ma?  
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—  
Must run 'crost and see her, too,  
Soon as she turned in and got  
Supper fer us—smokin'-hot—  
And the 'dishes' all wuz through.—"  
*Sich* a supper! W'y, I set  
There and et, and et, and et!—  
Jes' et on, tel Jonas he  
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,  
"I could walk *his* log!" and we  
All laughed then, tel 'Viry she

Lit the lamp—and I give in!—  
Riz and kissed her: “Heaven bless  
You!” says I—“you’re home ag’in—  
Same old dimple in your chin,  
Same white apern,” I-says-ee,  
“Same sweet girl, and good to see  
As your *mother* ust to be,—  
And I’ got you home ag’in—  
Home ag’in with me!”

I turns then to go on by her  
Through the door—and see her eyes  
Both wuz swimmin’, and she tries  
To say somepin’—can’t—and so  
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.  
Noticed Aunty’d made a fire  
In the settin’-room and gone  
Back where her p’serves wuz on  
Bilin’ in the kitchen. I  
Went out on the porch and set,  
Thinkin’-like. And by and by  
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,  
At the organ, kind o’ go  
A mi-anderin’ up and down  
With her fingers ’mongst the keys—  
“Vacant Chair” and “Old Camp-Groun’.” . . .

Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze  
Lazin' round the locus'-trees—  
Heerd the hosses champin', and  
Jonas feedin', and the hogs—  
Yes, and katydids and frogs—  
And a tree-toad, somers. Heerd  
Also whipperwills.—*My land!*—  
All so mournful ever'where—  
Them out here, and her in there,—  
'Most like 'tendin' *services!*  
*Anyway*, I must 'a' jes  
Kind o' drapped asleep, I guess;  
'Cause when Jonas must 'a' passed  
Me, a-comin' in, I knowed  
Nothin' of it—yit it seemed  
Sort o' like I kind o' dreamed  
'Bout him, too, a-slippin' in,  
And a-watchin' back to see  
Ef I *wuz* asleep, and then  
Passin' in where 'Viry wuz;  
And where I declare it does  
'Pear to me I heerd him say,  
Wild and glad and whisperin'—  
'Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,  
"Ah! I got you home ag'in—  
Home ag'in with me!"

## CASSANDER

“CASSANDER! O Cassander!”—her *mother's*  
voice seems cle'r  
As ever, from the old back-porch, a-hollerin'  
fer her—

Specially in airly Spring—like May, two year' ago—  
*Last* time she hollered fer her,—and Cassander didn't  
hear!

Cassander wuz so chirpy-like and sociable and free,  
And good to ever'body, and wuz even good to me  
Though *I* wuz jes' a common—well, a farm-hand,  
don't you know,  
A-workin' on her father's place, as pore as pore could be!

Her bein' jes' a' only child, Cassander had her way  
A good-'eal more'n other girls; and neighbors ust to say  
She looked most like her Mother, but wuz turned most  
like her Pap,—  
Except *he* had no use fer *town*-folks then—ner *yit to-*  
*day!*

I can't claim she encouraged *me*: She'd let me drive her  
in

To town sometimes, on Saturd'ys, and fetch her home  
ag'in,

Tel onc't she 'scused "Old Moll" and me,—and some  
blame' city-chap,

*He* driv her home, two-forty style, in face o' kith and  
kin.

She even tried to make him stay fer supper, but I 'low  
He must 'a' kind o' 'spicioned some objections.—Any-  
how,

Her mother callin' at her, whilse her father stood and  
shook

His fist,—the town-chap turnt his team and made his  
partin' bow.

"Cassander! *You*, Cassander!"—hear her mother 'jes'  
as plain,

And see Cassander blushin' like the peach-tree down the  
lane,

Whilse I sneaked on apast her, with a sort o' hang-dog  
look,

A-feelin' cheap as sorghum and as green as sugar-cane!

(You see, I'd *skooted* when she met her *town-beau*—  
when, in fact,  
Ef I'd had sense I'd *stayed* fer her.—But sense wuz what  
I lacked!

So I'd cut home ahead o' her, so's I could tell 'em what  
Wuz keepin' her. And—you know how a jealous fool'll  
act!)

I past her, I wuz sayin',—but she never turnt her head;  
I swaller'd-like and cle' red my th'oat—but that wuz all  
I said;

And whilse I hoped fer some word back, it wuzn't  
what I got.—

That girl'll not stay stiller on the day she's layin' dead!

Well, that-air silence *lasted*!—Ust to listen ever' day  
I'd be at work and hear her mother callin' thataway;

I'd *sight* Cassander, mayby, cuttin' home acrost the  
blue

And drizzly fields; but nary answer—nary word to say!

Putt in about two weeks o' that—two weeks o' rain and  
mud,

Er mostly so: I couldn't plow. The old crick like a  
flood:

And, lonesome as a borried dog, I'd wade them old  
woods through—  
The dogwood blossoms white as snow, and redbuds red  
as blood.

*Last* time her mother called her—sich a morning like as  
now:

The robins and the bluebirds, and the blossoms on the  
bough—

And this wuz yit 'fore brekfust, with the sun out at  
his best,  
And hosses kickin' in the barn—and dry enough to plow.

“Cassander! O Cassander!” . . . And her only answer—  
What?—

A letter, twisted round the cookstove damper, smokin'-  
hot,

A-statin': “I wuz married on that day of all the rest,  
The day my husband fetched me home—ef you ain't all  
fergot!”

“Cassander! O Cassander!” seems, allus, 'long in May,  
I hear her mother callin' her—a-callin', night and day—

“Cassander! O Cassander!” allus callin', as I say,  
“Cassander! O Cassander!” jes a-callin' thataway.

## WE MUST GET HOME

**W**E MUST get home! How could we stray  
like this?—  
So far from home, we know not where it  
is,—

Only in some fair, apple-blossomy place  
Of children's faces—and the mother's face—  
We dimly dream it, till the vision clears  
Even in the eyes of fancy, glad with tears.

We must get home—for we have been away  
So long, it seems forever and a day!  
And O so very homesick we have grown,  
The laughter of the world is like a moan  
In our tired hearing, and its songs as vain,—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home! With heart and soul we yearn  
To find the long-lost pathway, and return! . . .  
The child's shout lifted from the questing band  
Of old folk, faring weary, hand in hand,

But faces brightening, as if clouds at last  
Were showering sunshine on us as they passed.

We must get home: It hurts so, staying here,  
Where fond hearts must be wept out tear by tear,  
And where to wear wet lashes means, at best,  
When most our lack, the least our hope of rest—  
When most our need of joy, the more our pain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home—home to the simple things—  
The morning-glories twirling up the strings  
And bugling color, as they blared in blue-  
And-white o'er garden-gates we scampered through;  
The long grape-arbor, with its under-shade  
Blue as the green and purple overlaid.

We must get home: All is so quiet there:  
The touch of loving hands on brow and hair—  
Dim rooms, wherein the sunshine is made mild—  
The lost love of the mother and the child  
Restored in restful lullabies of rain,—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

The rows of sweetcorn and the China beans  
Beyond the lettuce-beds where, towering, leans

The giant sunflower in barbaric pride  
Guarding the barn-door and the lane outside;  
The honeysuckles, midst the hollyhocks,  
That clamber almost to the martin-box.

We must get home, where, as we nod and drowse,  
Time humors us and tiptoes through the house,  
And loves us best when sleeping baby-wise,  
With dreams—not tear-drops—brimming our clenched  
eyes,—

Pure dreams that know nor taint nor earthly stain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home! There only may we find  
The little playmates that we left behind,—  
Some racing down the road; some by the brook;  
Some droning at their desks, with wistful look  
Across the fields and orchards—farther still  
Where laughs and weeps the old wheel at the mill.

We must get home! The willow-whistle's call  
Trills crisp and liquid as the waterfall—  
Mocking the trillers in the cherry-trees  
And making discord of such rhymes as these,  
That know nor lilt nor cadence but the birds  
First warbled—then all poets afterwards.

We must get home; and, unremembering there  
All gain of all ambition elsewhere,  
Rest—from the feverish victory, and the crown  
Of conquest whose waste glory weighs us down.—  
Fame's fairest gifts we toss back with disdain—  
We must get home—we must get home again!

We must get home again—we must—we must!—  
(Our rainy faces pelted in the dust)  
Creep back from the vain quest through endless strife  
To find not anywhere in all of life  
A happier happiness than blest us then. . . .  
We must get home—we must get home again!

## US FARMERS IN THE COUNTRY

US FARMERS in the country, as the seasons go  
and come,  
Is purty much like other folks,—we're apt to  
grumble some!

The Spring's too back'ard fer us, er too for'ard—ary  
one—

We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er none!

The thaw's set in too suddent; er the frost's stayed in the  
soil

Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is bound  
to spoil.

The weather's eether most too mild, er too outrageous  
rough,

And altogether too much rain, er not half rain enough!

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane enough to  
see:

It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you and me  
And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine er rain,  
And post 'em when to shet her off, er let her on again!

And yit I'd ruther, after all—consider'n' other chores  
I' got on hands, a-tendin' both to my affares and yours—  
I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-rulin' things up thare,  
And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude and  
prayer.

## A CHILD'S HOME—LONG AGO

**E**VEN as the gas-flames flicker to and fro,  
The Old Man's wavering fancies leap and  
glow—

As o'er the vision, like a mirage, falls  
The old log cabin with its dingy walls,  
And crippled chimney with its crutch-like prop  
Beneath a sagging shoulder at the top:  
The coonskin battened fast on either side—  
The wisps of leaf-tobacco—"cut-and-dried";  
The yellow strands of quartered apples, hung  
In rich festoons that tangle in among  
The morning-glory vines that clamber o'er  
The little clapboard roof above the door:  
The old well-sweep that drops a courtesy  
To every thirsting soul so graciously,  
The stranger, as he drains the dripping gourd,  
Intuitively murmurs, "Thank the Lord!"  
Again through mists of memory arise  
The simple scenes of home before the eyes:—  
The happy mother, humming, with her wheel,  
The dear old melodies that used to steal

So drowsily upon the summer air,  
The house-dog hid his bone, forgot his care,  
And nestled at her feet, to dream, perchance,  
Some cooling dream of winter-time romance:  
The square of sunshine through the open door  
That notched its edge across the puncheon floor,  
And made a golden coverlet whereon  
The god of slumber had a picture drawn  
Of Babyhood, in all the loveliness  
Of dimpled cheek and limb and linsey dress:  
The bough-filled fireplace, and the mantel wide,  
Its fire-scorched ankles stretched on either side,  
Where, perched upon its shoulders 'neath the joist,  
The old clock hiccoughed, harsh and husky-voiced,  
And snarled the premonition, dire and dread,  
When it should hammer Time upon the head:  
Tomatoes, red and yellow, in a row,  
Preserved not then for diet, but for show,—  
Like rare and precious jewels in the rough  
Whose worth was not appraised at half enough:  
The jars of jelly, with their dusty tops;  
The bunch of pennyroyal; the cordial drops;  
The flask of camphor, and the vial of squills,  
The box of buttons, garden-seeds, and pills;  
And, ending all the mantel's bric-à-brac,  
The old, time-honored "Family Almanack."

And memory, with a mother's touch of love,  
Climbs with us to the dusky loft above,  
Where drowsily we trail our fingers in  
The mealy treasures of the harvest bin;  
And, feeling with our hands the open track,  
We pat the bag of barley on the back;  
And, groping onward through the mellow gloom,  
We catch the hidden apple's faint perfume,  
And, mingling with it, fragrant hints of pear  
And musky melon ripening somewhere.  
Again we stretch our limbs upon the bed  
Where first our simple childish prayers were said;  
And while, without, the gallant cricket trills  
A challenge to the solemn whippoorwills,  
And, filing on the chorus with his glee,  
The katydid whets all the harmony  
To feather-edge of incoherent song,  
We drop asleep, and peacefully along  
The current of our dreams we glide away  
To the dim harbor of another day.

## A VOICE FROM THE FARM

**I**T IS my dream to have you here with me,  
Out of the heated city's dust and din—  
Here where the colts have room to gambol in,  
And kine to graze, in clover to the knee.  
I want to see your wan face happily  
Lit with the wholesome smiles that have not been  
In use since the old games you used to win  
When we pitched horseshoes: And I want to be  
At utter loaf with you in this dim land  
Of grove and meadow, while the crickets make  
Our own talk tedious, and the bat wields  
His bulky flight, as we cease converse and  
In a dusk like velvet smoothly take  
Our way toward home across the dewy fields.

## HOME-FOLKS

**H**OME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me  
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—  
That is, ef poetry is jis  
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—  
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,  
Without no overpowerin' sense  
Of their oncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git  
The habit fastened on 'em yit  
So as to ever interfere  
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,  
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;  
But whether country-jakes er town-,  
They know when eggs is up er down!

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet  
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?  
And can't you see their faces, bright  
As circus-day, heave into sight?

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear  
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,  
And allus find their laughin' eyes  
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away,  
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?  
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised  
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all  
'At ranges this terreschul ball,—  
But, north er south, er east er west,  
It's home is where you're at your best.—

It's home—it's home your faces shine,  
In-nunder your own fig and vine—  
Your fambly and your neighbors 'bout  
Ye, and the latch-string hangin' out

Home-Folks—*at home*,—I know o' one  
Old feller now 'at hain't got none.—  
Invite him—he may hold back some—  
But *you* invite him, and he'll come.

## THE HOOSIER FOLK-CHILD

**T**HE Hoosier Folk-Child—all unsung—  
Unlettered all of mind and tongue;  
Unmastered, unmolested—made  
Most wholly frank and unafraid:  
Untaught of any school—unvexed  
Of law or creed—all unperplexed—  
Unsermoned, ay, and undefiled,  
An all imperfect-perfect child—  
A type which (Heaven forgive us! ) you  
And I do tardy honor to,  
And so profane the sanctities  
Of our most sacred memories.  
Who, growing thus from boy to man,  
That dares not be American?  
Go, Pride, with prudent underbuzz—  
Go *whistle!* as the Folk-Child does.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's world is not  
Much wider than the stable-lot  
Between the house and highway fence  
That bounds the home his father rents.

His playmates mostly are the ducks  
And chickens, and the boy that "shucks  
Corn by the shock," and talks of town,  
And whether eggs are "up" or "down,"  
And prophecies in boastful tone  
Of "owning horses of his own,"  
And "being his own man," and "when  
He gets to be, what he'll do then."—  
Takes out his jack-knife dreamily  
And makes the Folk-Child two or three  
Crude corn-stalk figures,—a wee span  
Of horses and a little man.

The Hoosier Folk-Child's eyes are wise  
And wide and round as Brownies' eyes:  
The smile they wear is ever blent  
With all-expectant wonderment,—  
On homeliest things they bend a look  
As rapt as o'er a picture-book,  
And seem to ask, whate'er befall,  
The happy reason of it all:—  
Why grass is all so glad a green,  
And leaves—and what their lispings mean;—  
Why buds grow on the boughs, and why  
They burst in blossom by and by—  
As though the orchard in the breeze  
Had shook and popped its *pop-corn trees*,

To lure and whet, as well they might,  
Some seven-league giant's appetite!

The Hoosier Folk-Child's chubby face  
Has scant refinement, caste or grace,—  
From crown to chin, and cheek to cheek,  
It bears the grimy water-streak  
Of rinsings such as some long rain  
Might drool across the window-pane  
Wherethrough he peers, with troubled frown,  
As some lorn team drives by for town.  
His brow is elfed with wispish hair,  
With tangles in it here and there,  
As though the warlocks snarled it so  
At midmirk when the moon sagged low,  
And boughs did toss and skreek and shake,  
And children moaned themselves awake,  
With fingers clutched, and starting sight  
Blind as the blackness of the night!

The Hoosier Folk-Child! —Rich is he  
In all the wealth of poverty!  
He owns nor title nor estate,  
Nor speech but half articulate,—  
He owns nor princely robe nor crown;—  
Yet, draped in patched and faded brown,  
He owns the bird-songs of the hills—  
The laughter of the April rills;

And his are all the diamonds set  
In Morning's dewy coronet,—  
And his the Dusk's first minted stars  
That twinkle through the pasture-bars  
And litter all the skies at night  
With glittering scraps of silver light;—  
The rainbow's bar, from rim to rim,  
In beaten gold, belongs to him.

## WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING

**T**HERE wasn't two purtier farms in the state  
Than the couple of which I'm about to relate;—  
Jinin' each other—belongin' to Brown,  
And jest at the edge of a flourishin' town.  
Brown was a man, as I understand,  
That allus had handled a good 'eal o' land,  
And was sharp as a tack in drivin' a trade—  
For that's the way most of his money was made.  
And all the grounds and the orchards about  
His two pet farms was all tricked out  
With poppies and posies  
And sweet-smellin' rosies;  
And hundreds o' kinds  
Of all sorts o' vines,  
To tickle the most horticultural minds;  
And little dwarf trees not as thick as your wrist  
With ripe apples on 'em as big as your fist:  
And peaches,—Siberian crabs and pears,  
And quinces—Well! *any* fruit *any* tree bears;  
And the purtiest stream—jest a-swimmin' with fish,  
And—*jest a'most everything heart could wish!*

The purtiest orch'ards—I wish you could see  
 How purty they was, fer I know it 'ud be  
 A regular treat!—but I'll go ahead with  
 My story! A man by the name o' Smith—  
 (A bad name to rhyme,  
 But I reckon that I'm  
 Not goin' back on a Smith! nary time!)  
 'At hadn't a soul of kin nor kith,  
 And more money than he knowed what to do with,—  
 So he comes a-ridin' along one day,  
 And *he* says to Brown, in his offhand way—  
 Who was trainin' some newfangled vines round a bay-  
 Winder—"Howdy-do—look-a-here—say:  
 What'll you take fer this property here?—  
 I'm talkin' o' leavin' the city this year,  
 And I want to be  
 Where the air is free,  
 And I'll *buy* this place, if it ain't too dear!"—  
 Well—they grumbled and jawed aroun'—  
 "I don't like to part with the place," says Brown;  
 "Well," says Smith, a-jerkin' his head,  
 "That house yonder—bricks painted red—  
 Jest like this'n—a *purtier view*—  
 Who is it owns *it*?" "That's mine too,"  
 Says Brown, as he winked at a hole in his shoe,  
 "But I'll tell you right here jest what I *kin* do:—  
 If you'll pay the figgers I'll sell *it* to you."

Smith went over and looked at the place—  
Badgered with Brown, and argied the case—  
Thought that Brown's figgers was rather too tall,  
But, findin' that Brown wasn't goin' to fall,  
In final agreed,  
So they drewed up the deed  
Fer the farm and the fixtures—the live stock an' all.  
And so Smith moved from the city as soon  
As he possibly could—But "the man in the moon"  
Knowed more'n Smith o' farmin' pursuits,  
And jest to convince you, and have no disputes,  
How little he knowed,  
I'll tell you his "mode,"  
As he called it, o' raisin' "the best that growed,"  
In the way o' potatoes—  
Cucumbers—tomatoes,  
And squashes as lengthy as young alligators.  
'Twas allus a curious thing to me  
How big a fool a feller kin be  
When he gits on a farm after leavin' a town!—  
Expectin' to raise himself up to renown,  
And reap fer himself agricultural fame,  
By growin' of squashes—*without any shame*—  
As useless and long as a technical name.  
To make the soil pure,  
And certainly sure,  
He plastered the ground with patent manure.

He had cultivators, and double-hoss plows,  
And patent machines fer milkin' his cows;  
And patent hay-forks—patent measures and weights,  
And new patent back-action hinges fer gates,  
And barn locks and latches, and such little dribs  
And patents to keep the rats out o' the cribs—  
Reapers and mowers,  
And patent grain sowers;  
And drillers  
And tillers  
And cucumber hillers,  
And harriers;—and had patent rollers and scrapers,  
And took about ten agricultural papers.  
So you can imagine how matters turned out:  
But *Brown* didn't have not a shadder o' doubt  
That *Smith* didn't know what he was about  
When he said that "the *old* way to farm was played out."  
But *Smith* worked ahead,  
And when any one said  
That the *old* way o' workin' was better instead  
O' his "modern idees," he allus turned red,  
And wanted to know  
What made people so  
*Infernally* anxious to hear theirselves crow?  
And guessed that he'd manage to hoe his own row.  
*Brown* he come onc't and leant over the fence,  
And told *Smith* that he couldn't see any sense

In goin' to such a tremendous expense  
Fer the sake o' such no-account experiments:—  
"That'll never make corn!  
As shore's you're born  
It'll come out the leetlest end of the horn!"  
Says Brown, as he pulled off a big roastin'-ear  
From a stalk of his own  
That had tribble outgrown  
Smith's poor yaller shoots, and says he, "Looky here!  
*This* corn was raised in the old-fashioned way,  
And I rather imagine that *this* corn'll pay  
Expenses fer *raisin'* it!—What do you say?"  
Brown got him then to look over his crop.—  
*His* luck that season had been tip-top!  
And you may surmise  
Smith opened his eyes  
And let out a look o' the wildest surprise  
When Brown showed him punkins as big as the lies  
He was stuffin' him with—about offers he's had  
Fer his farm: "I don't want to sell very bad,"  
He says, but says he,  
"Mr. Smith, you kin see  
Fer yourself how matters is standin' with me,  
*I understand farmin'* and I'd better stay,  
You know, on my farm;—I'm a-makin' it pay—

I oughtn't to grumble!—I reckon I'll clear  
Away over four thousand dollars this year.”  
And that was the reason, he made it appear,  
Why he didn't care about sellin' his farm,  
And hinted at his havin' done himself harm  
In sellin' the other, and wanted to know  
If Smith wouldn't sell back ag'in to him.—So  
Smith took the bait, and says he, “Mr. Brown,  
I wouldn't *sell* out, but we might swap aroun'—  
How'll you trade your place fer mine?”  
(Purty sharp way o' comin' the shine  
Over Smith! Wasn't it?) Well, sir, this Brown  
Played out his hand and brought Smithy down—  
Traded with him an', workin' it cute,  
Raked in two thousand dollars to boot  
As slick as a whistle, an' that wasn't all,—  
He managed to trade back ag'in the next fall,  
And the next—and the next—as long as Smith stayed  
He reaped with his harvests an annual trade.—  
Why, I reckon that Brown must 'a' easily made—  
On an *average*—nearly two thousand a year—  
Together he made over seven thousand—clear.—  
Till Mr. Smith found he was losin' his health  
In as big a proportion, almost, as his wealth;

So at last he concluded to move back to town,  
And sold back his farm to this same Mr. Brown  
At very low figgers, by gittin' it down.  
Further'n this I have nothin' to say  
Than merely advisin' the Smiths fer to stay  
In their grocery stores in flourishin' towns  
And leave agriculture alone—and the Browns.

## HOME AT NIGHT

**W**HEN chirping crickets fainter cry,  
And pale stars blossom in the sky,  
And twilight's gloom has dimmed the bloom  
And blurred the butterfly:

When locust-blossoms fleck the walk,  
And up the tiger-lily stalk  
The glow-worm crawls and clings and falls  
And glimmers down the garden-walls:

When buzzing things, with double wings  
Of crisp and raspish flutterings,  
Go whizzing by so very nigh  
One thinks of fangs and stings:—

O then, within, is stilled the din  
Of crib she rocks the baby in,  
And heart and gate and latch's weight  
Are lifted—and the lips of Kate.

## A CANARY AT THE FARM

FOLKS has be'n to town, and Sahry  
Fetched 'er home a pet canary,—  
And of all the blame', contrary,  
Aggervatin' things alive!  
I love music—that's I love it  
When it's *free*—and plenty of it;—  
But I kindo' git above it,  
At a dollar-eighty-five!

Reason's plain as I'm a-sayin'—  
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'  
Out yer money, and a-payin'  
Fer a willer-cage and bird,  
When the medder-larks is wingin'  
Round you, and the woods is ringin'  
With the beautifullest singin'  
That a mortal ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'.—So I tell her  
He's a purty little feller,  
With his wings o' creamy-yeller,  
    And his eyes keen as a cat;  
And the twitter o' the critter  
'Pears to absolutely glitter!  
Guess I'll haf to go and git her  
    A high-priceter cage 'n that!

## HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY

**W**HEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-  
goin' now,—  
The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on  
ever' bough

A-sort o' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,  
Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the sun!  
The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their breakfast,  
and the Spring  
Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to sing! —  
When things is goin' *thisaway*, w'y, that's the sign, you  
know,  
That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!  
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost and  
snow—  
The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the ground,  
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes' look  
around!—

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git the  
chance,

'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled circum-  
stance!

And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the show.  
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

The sun ain't jes' p'tendin' *now*!—The ba'm is in the  
breeze—

The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as green as  
trees;

The buds is all jes' *eechin'*, and the dogwood down the  
run

Is bound to bu'st out laughin' 'fore another week is done;  
The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their  
buzz,

A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—  
When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover, don't  
you know. . . .

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

## ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK

**O**N THE banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place  
fer me!—

Worter slidin' past ye jes' as clair as it kin be:  
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,  
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazin' by;  
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—  
And I purt' nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and the  
breeze!

Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea:  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mil'd er two from town—  
'Long up where the mill-race comes a-loafin' down,—  
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—  
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she pours:  
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,  
Where the fish is jes' so thick you kin see 'em shine  
As they flicker round yer bait, *coaxin'* you to jerk,  
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as *work!*

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight  
Jes' to be around there—take it day er night!—  
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day  
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—  
Snake-feeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;  
And dewfall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at  
night—

Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—  
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the old  
by-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to "John-  
son's Hole,"

And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:  
Have yer "dog-leg" with ye, and yer pipe and "cut-and-  
dry"—

Pocketful o' corn-bread, and slug er two o' rye,—  
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—  
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there're none to  
make afraid!"

Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea—  
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

## OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME

**I**N the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago,  
It was not so cold as now—  
Oh! No! No!  
Then, as I remember,  
Snowballs to eat  
Were as good as apples now,  
And every bit as sweet!

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Bub was warm as summer,  
With his red mitts on,—  
Just in his little waist-  
And-pants all together,  
Who ever heard him growl  
About cold weather?

In the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago—  
Was it *half* so cold as now?  
Oh! No! No!  
Who caught his death o' cold,  
Making prints of men  
Flat-backed in snow that now's  
Twice as cold again?

In the jolly winters  
Of the dead-and-gone,  
Startin' out rabbit huntin'—  
Early as the dawn,—  
Who ever froze his fingers,  
Ears, heels, or toes,—  
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?  
Nobody knows!

Nights by the kitchen stove,  
Shellin' white and red  
Corn in the skillet, and  
Sleepin' four abed!  
Ah! the jolly winters  
Of the long-ago!  
We were not as old as now—  
Oh! No! No!

## THE MULBERRY TREE

**O** IT'S many's the scenes which is dear to my  
mind  
, As I think of my childhood so long left be-  
hind;

The home of my birth, with its old puncheon-floor,  
And the bright morning-glorys that grewed round the  
door;

The warped clabboard roof whare the rain it run off  
Into streams of sweet dreams as I laid in the loft,  
Countin' all of the joys that was dearest to me,  
And a-thinkin' the most of the mulberry tree.

And to-day as I dream, with both eyes wide-awake,  
I can see the old tree, and its limbs as they shake,  
And the long purple berries that rained on the ground  
Whare the pastur' was bald whare we trompt it around.  
And again, peekin' up through the thick leafy shade,  
I can see the glad smiles of the friends when I strayed  
With my little bare feet from my own mother's knee  
To foller them off to the mulberry tree.

Leanin' up in the forks, I can see the old rail,  
And the boy climbin' up it, claw, tooth, and toe-nail,  
And in fancy can hear, as he spits on his hands,  
The ring of his laugh and the rip of his pants.  
But that rail led to glory, as certin and shore  
As I'll never climb thare by that rout' any more—  
What was all the green lauruls of Fame unto me,  
With my brows in the boughs of the mulberry tree!

Then it's who can fergit the old mulberry tree  
That he knowed in the days when his thoughts was as  
free

As the flutterin' wings of the birds that flew out  
Of the tall wavin' tops as the boys come about?  
O, a crowd of my memories, laughin' and gay,  
Is a-climbin' the fence of that pastur' to-day,  
And a-pantin' with joy, as us boys ust to be,  
They go racin' acrost fer the mulberry tree.

















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